Letter-Meditations on the Tarot (TAROT)

Letters I - VII

A Journey into Christian Hermeticism

translated from the French original by

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Reviser's Preface

In the autumn of 1996, I first had the opportunity to see the original document from which Robert Powell made his translation into English of "Meditations on the Tarot". I then saw that this work contained many wonderful and fascinating and meaningful forms of expression, many or most of which were not available in any of the published editions of the book (including here translations I've seen in English, French, German and Russian). Subsequently I decided to attempt a revision of the English version which would incorporate these elements. The book which you are now reading is the result of this effort.

Herewith follows a description of, firstly, the production and distribution of the original work of "Meditations on the Tarot", Robert's "original document", an abbreviated history of his work and, finally, my work.

The original work was written (in French) between 1961 and 1967, with most of it being written during the 3½-year "culmination" (of the 33⅓-year rhythm) of the Etheric Christ's activity in the middle of the 20th century. The question of its authorship is dealt with in the book itself, requiring no further discussion here. It was then sent to Stefan Lubienski, a friend of the author (who was formerly a Polish aristocrat), to be transformed from a handwritten work into a typewritten one. Mr. Lubienski then sent out about 50 (mimeographed) copies of it to other friends of the anonymous author. Eva Cliteur, who lived in Amsterdam, was one of these friends. In her reading of it, she noticed what appeared to be gaps or inaccuracies in it and so she contacted Mr. Lubienski and subsequently received the original handwritten manuscript from him. Comparing the original manuscript with the mimeographed version, she was able to make many corrections to the latter. (It should be mentioned that Mr. Lubienski was elderly when he did this work and sometimes would lose his place in the transcribing, for example, when the telephone would ring and he then returned to work.) Some time later the original manuscript was returned to the author. It is no longer extant.

All this happened before 1972. During the Holy Nights 1977/78, Eva Cliteur met Robert Powell, whom she gave her "corrected" work saying, "You are the one to translate this into English!". He translated it into English between 1978 and 1982 when he was studying eurythmy in Dornach, Switzerland. It is very unlikely that other owners of this "original document" (one of the 50) had access to the handwritten document; however, it is known that at least one primitive version was published (in German) while he, the anonymous author, was still alive (against the author's wishes, as he

intended the work for posthumous publication). After Robert completed his translation, he looked for someone to publish it. He had hoped to find a Catholic printing house for this purpose and eventually did so in the firm of Amity House. Amity House published it in 1985; they were succeeded by Element Books in 1991 and reprinted it in 1993 and again in 1999.

The "original document" in Robert's possession is about 665 pages long and is typed primarily in a double spaced format on 8½"x14" paper except for the first Letter which was typed single spaced (as were most of the longer quotations in the rest of the book). In addition, the first half of the twenty-first Letter was typed (single spaced) on a different typewriter.

My work closely adheres to Robert's admirable translation. Corrections were sometimes made on the Greek and Hebrew quotations. There is a style and a poetry in the original French that is often not able to be translated directly into another language. Also in the original work there was less translation of the Latin expressions and less identification of the quotations (Biblical and otherwise) and, speaking personally, I am grateful to Robert for having done this additional work. There were a very few situations where neither Robert nor I chose to leave intact that which was to be found in the manuscript. I should also mention here that there was a deliberate attempt on my part to maintain a visual correspondence between the original work and this current work, despite the obvious limitations that naturally inhere in such an exercise.

There are two other things that should be mentioned here to avoid possible misinterpretation. Firstly, when the space between two sentences on a line is a little longer than might be expected, this is usually not the result of sloppy writing but is rather a faithful reproduction of what exists in the "original document". Secondly, whenever there is a space or a pause between paragraphs, it is never to be found as the first or last line of a page, as this could be mistaken too easily for the space at the top or bottom margin.

This current text has been checked and re-checked for errors such as missing words, spelling mistakes, etc., and I can now say there is hardly any need for a list of errata.

It should, lastly, not go without mention that this English edition has always been dedicated to Our Lady of Chartres.

Bradley Rader
January 12, 2000

Foreword

These meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot are Letters addressed to the Unknown Friend. The addressee in this instance is anyone who will read all of them and who thereby acquires definite knowledge, through the experience of meditative reading, about Christian Hermeticism. He will know also that the author of these Letters has said more about himself in these Letters than he would have been able to in any other way. No matter what other source he might have, he will know the author better through the Letters themselves.

These Letters are written in French because in France – since the XVIIIth century until the present time, i.e. the second half of the XXth century – there exists a literature on the Tarot, a phenomenon which is found nowhere else. On the other hand, there existed in France – and it still persists – a continuous tradition of Hermeticism, in which is united a spirit of free research with one of respect for the tradition. The purpose of these Letters therefore will be to "incarnate" into this tradition, i.e. to become an organic part of it, and in this way to contribute support to it.

As these Letters are intended only to serve, to sustain and to support the Hermetic Tradition – from its first appearance in the epoch of Hermes Trismegistus, lost in the remoteness of antiquity and become legendary – they are a definite manifestation of this millennial-old current of thought, effort and revelation. Their aim is not only to revive the Tradition in the twentieth century but also – and above all – to immerse the reader – or rather the Unknown Friend – in this current, be it temporarily or for ever. For this reason the numerous citations of ancient and modern authors which you will find in these Letters are not due to literary considerations, nor to a display of erudition. They are evocations of the masters of the Tradition, in order that they may be present with their impulses of aspiration and their light of thought in the current of meditative thought which these Letters on the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot represent. For these are in essence twenty-two spiritual exercises, by means of which you, dear Unknown Friend, will immerse yourself in the current of the living Tradition, and thus enter into the community of spirits who have served it and who are still serving it.

And the citations in question only serve the aim of a relief-setting for this community. For the links in the chain of the tradition are not thoughts and efforts alone; they are above all living beings who were thinking these thoughts and willing these efforts. The essence of the Tradition is not a doctrine, but rather a community of spirits from age to age.

There remains nothing more to say in this foreword to the Letter-Meditations on the Tarot,

because all other questions concerning them will find a response in the Letters themselves.

Your Friend greets you, dear Unknown Friend, from beyond the grave.

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Letter I:- MEDITATION on the First Major Arcanum of the TAROT
"The Magician"
"Le Bateleur"

Spiritus ubi vult spirat: et vocem ejus audis, sed nescis unde veniat, aut quo vadat: sic est omnis, qui natus est ex spiritu.
(John iii, 8)

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit. (John iii, 8)

"Into this happy night,
In secret, seen of none,
Nor saw I aught,
Without other light or guide,
Save that which in my heart did burn."
(St. John of the Cross, "Canciones del Alma", "The Dark Night of the Soul", verse iii; trsl. G.C. Graham, London, 1922, p. 29)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The words of the Master cited above haved served me the key for opening the door to comprehension of the first Major Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Magician", which is, in turn, the key to all the other Major Arcana. This is why I have put them as an epigraph to this Letter. And then I have cited a verse from the "Songs of the Soul" of St. John of the Cross, because it has the virtue of awakening the deeper layers of the soul, which one has to appeal to when the concern is the first Arcanum of the Tarot and, consequently, all the Major Arcana of the Tarot. For the Major Arcana of the Tarot are authentic <u>symbols</u>, i.e. they are "magic, mental, psychic and moral operations" awakening new notions, ideas, sentiments and aspirations, which means to say that they require an activity more profound than that of study and intellectual explanation. It is therefore in a state of deep contemplation — and always ever deeper — that they should be approached. And it is the deep and intimate layers of the soul which become active and bear fruit when one meditates on the Arcana of the Tarot. Therefore this "night", of which St. John of the Cross speaks, is necessary, where one withdraws oneself "in secret" and into which one has to immerse oneself each time that one meditates on the Arcana of the Tarot. It is a work to be accomplished in solitude, and is all the more suitable for recluses.

The Major Arcana of the Tarot are neither allegories nor secrets, because allegories are, in fact, only figurative representations of abstract notions, and secrets are only facts, procedures,

practices, or whatever doctrines that one keeps to oneself for a personal motive, since they are able to be understood and put into practice by others to whom one does not want to reveal them. The Major Arcana of the Tarot are authentic symbols. They conceal and reveal their sense at one and the same time according to the depth of meditation. That which they reveal are not secrets, i.e. things hidden by human will, but are arcana, which is something quite different. An arcanum is that which it is necessary to "k n o w" in order to be fruitful in a given domain of spiritual life. It is that which must be actively present in our consciousness — or even in our subconscious — in order to render us capable of making discoveries, engendering new ideas, conceiving of new artistic subjects. In a word, it makes us fertile in our creative pursuits, in whatever domain of spiritual life. An arcanum is a "ferment" or an "enzyme" whose presence stimulates the spiritual and the psychic life of man. And it is symbols which are the bearers of these "ferments" or "enzymes" and which communicate them — if the mentality and morality of the recipient is ready, i.e. if he is "poor in spirit" and does not suffer from the most serious spiritual malady: - self-complacency.

Just as the arcanum is superior to the secret, so is the mystery superior to the arcanum. The mystery is more than a stimulating "ferment". It is a spiritual event comparable to physical birth or death. It is a change of the entire spiritual and psychic motivation, or a complete change of the plane of consciousness. The seven sacraments of the Church are the prismatic colors of the white light of one sole Mystery or Sacrament, known as that of the second birth, which the Master pointed out to Nicodemus in the nocturnal initiation conversation which He had with him. It is this which Christian Hermeticism understands by "the Great Initiation".

It goes without saying that nobody initiates anyone else, if we understand by "initiation" the Mystery of the second birth or the Great Sacrament. This Initiation is operative from above and has the value and the duration of eternity. The Initiator is above, and here below one meets only the fellow pupils (con-disciples); and they recognize each other by the fact that they love one another. There are no longer any more Masters because there is only one sole M a s t e r, who is the Initiator above. To be sure, there are always masters who teach their doctrines and also initiates who communicate some of the secrets which they possess to others who thus become in their turn the "initiates" -- but all this has nothing to do with the Mystery of the Great Initiation.

For this reason Christian Hermeticism, in so far as it is a human concern, initiates no one. Amongst Christian Hermeticists nobody assumes for himself the title and the function of Initiator or Master. For all are fellow pupils and each is master of each in some respect — just as each is a pupil of each in some other respect. We cannot do better than to follow the example of St. Anthony the Great, who "subjected himself in all sincerity to the pious men whom he visited and made it his endeavor to learn for his own benefit just how each was superior to him in zeal and ascetic practice. He observed the graciousness of one, the earnestness at prayer in another; studied the even temper of one and the kindheartedness of another; fixed his attention on the vigils kept by one and on the studies pursued by another; admired one for his patient endurance, another for his fasting and

sleeping on the ground; watched closely this man's meekness and the forbearance shown by another; and in one and all alike he marked especially devotion to Christ and the love they had for one another. Having thus taken his fill, he would return to his own place of asceticism. Then he assimilated in himself what he had obtained from each and devoted all his energies to realizing in himself the virtues of all..." - (St. Athanasius, "The Life of St. Anthony", ch.4; trsl. R.T. Meyer, Westminster, 1950, p.21).

It is the same conduct which must be applied by the Christian Hermeticist in that which concerns knowledge and science — natural, historical, philological, philosophical, theological, symbolical and traditional. It amounts to learning the art of Learning.

Now, it is the Arcana which stimulate us and at the same time guide us in the art of learning. In this sense, the Major Arcana of the Tarot are a complete, entire, invaluable school of meditation, study and spiritual effort — a masterly school in the art of Learning.

Dear Unknown Friend, Christian Hermeticism therefore has no pretension to rival either religion or official science. He who is searching here for the "true religion", the "true philosophy", or the "true science" is looking in the wrong direction. Christian Hermeticists are not masters, but servants. They do not have the pretension (that is, in any case, somewhat puerile) of elevating themselves above the holy faith of the faithful, or above the fruits of the admirable efforts of workers in science, or above the creations of artistic genius. Hermeticists are not guarding the secret of future discoveries in the sciences. They do not know, for example, just as everyone at present is ignorant of it, the effective remedy against cancer. Moreover they would be monsters if they were to guard the secret of the remedy against this bane of humanity without communicating it. No, they do not know it, and they will be the first to recognize the superiority of the future benefactor of the human race, that savant who will discover this remedy.

Likewise they recognize without reserve the superiority of a Francis of Assisi -- and of many others — who was a man of the so-called "exoteric" faith. They know also that each sincere believer is potentially a Francis of Assisi... Men and women of faith, of science and of art are their superiors in many essential points. Hermeticists know it well and do not flatter themselves to be better, to believe better, to know better or to be more competent. They do not secretly guard a religion, which to them is more appropriate, to replace existing religions, or a science to replace the current sciences, or arts to replace the fine arts of today or yesterday. That which they possess does not comprise any tangible advantage or objective superiority with regard to religion, science and art; what they possess is only the communal soul of religion, science and art. What is this mission of conserving the communal soul of religion, science and art? I am going to reply with a concrete example, as follows:--

You know without doubt, dear Unknown Friend, that many — and several of them are writers - in France, Germany, England, and elsewhere, promulgate the doctrine of the so-called "two churches": the church of Peter and the church of John, or of "two epochs" — the epoch of Peter and the epoch of John. You know also that this doctrine

teaches the end — more or less at hand — of the church of Peter, or above all of the papacy which is its visible symbol, and that the spirit of John, the disciple loved by the Master, he who leaned on his breast and heard the beating of his heart, will replace it. In this way it teaches that the "exoteric" church of Peter will make way for the "esoteric" church of John, which will be that of perfect freedom.

Now, John, who submitted himself voluntarily to Peter as leader or prince of the apostles, did not become his successor after his death, although he outlived Peter by many years. The beloved disciple who listened to the beating of the Master's heart was, is, and always will be the representative and guardian of this heart — and as such he was not, is not, and never will be the <u>leader</u> or <u>head</u> of the Church. Because just as the heart is not called upon to replace the head, so is John not called upon to succeed Peter. The heart certainly guards the life of the body and the soul, but it is the head which makes decisions, directs and chooses the means for the accomplishment of the tasks of the entire organism — head, heart and limbs. The mission of John is to keep <u>the life and soul</u> of the Church <u>alive</u> until the Second Coming of the Lord. This is why John has never claimed and never will claim the office of directing the body of the Church. He <u>vivifies</u> this body, but he does not direct its actions.

Now Hermeticism, the living Hermetic tradition, guards the communal soul of all true culture. I must add: - <u>Hermeticists listen to</u> — and now and then hear — <u>the beating of the heart of the spiritual life of humanity</u>. They cannot do otherwise than live as guardians of the life and communal soul of religion, science and art. They do not have any privilege in any of these domains; saints, true scientists, and artists of genius are their superiors. But they live for the mystery of the communal heart which beats within all religions, all philosophies, all arts and all sciences — past, present and future. And inspired by the example of John, the beloved disciple, they do not pretend, and never will pretend, to play a directing role in religion, science, art, in social or political life; but they are constantly attentive so as not to miss any occasion to <u>serve</u> religion, philosophy, science, art, the social and political life of humanity, and to this to infuse the breath of life of their communal soul — analogous to the administration of the sacrament of Holy Communion. Hermeticism is — and is only — a stimulant, a "ferment" or an "enzyme" in the organism of the spiritual life of humanity. In this sense it is itself an <u>Arcanum</u> — that is to say the antecedent of the Mystery of the second birth or the Great Initiation.

This is the spirit of Hermeticism. And it is in this spirit that we now return to the first Major Arcanum of the Tarot.

Of what does this first Card consist?

A young man, wearing a large hat in the form of a lemniscate, standing behind a small table on which are arranged: a yellow-painted vase; three small yellow discs; another four red discs, in two piles, each divided down the middle by a line; a red beaker with two dice; a knife withdrawn from its sheath; and lastly a yellow bag for carrying these various objects. The young man — who is the M a g i c i a n — holds a rod in his right hand (from the

standpoint of the observer) and a ball or yellow object in his left hand. He holds these two objects with perfect ease, without clasping them or showing any other sign of tension, encumbrance, haste or effort. What he does with his hands is with perfect spontaneity – it is easy play and not work. He himself does not follow the movement of his hands; his gaze is elsewhere.

Such is this Card.

That the series of symbols, that is to say of the revealers of the arcana, which is the game of Tarot, is opened by an image representing a player tricks – a magician (or juggler) who plays – is truly astonishing! How may this be explained?

The first Arcanum – the principle underlying all the other 21 Major Arcana of the Tarot – is that of the rapport of personal effort and of spiritual reality. It occupies the first place in the series because if one does not understand it (i.e. take hold of it in cognitive and actual practice), one would not know what to do with all the other arcana. For it is "The Magician" who is called to reveal the practical method relating to all the arcana. He is the "Arcanum of the Arcana", in the sense that he reveals that which it is necessary to know and to will in order to enter the school of spiritual exercises whose totality comprises the game of Tarot, in order to be able to derive some benefit therefrom.

In fact, the first and fundamental principle of esotericism (i.e. of the way of experience of the reality of the Spirit) can be rendered by the formula:

> Learn at first concentration without effort; transform work into play; make every yoke that you have accepted easy and every burden that you carry light!

This counsel, or command, or even warning, however you wish to take it, is most serious; this is attested by its original source, namely the words of the Master Himself :- "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew xi, 30).

Let us examine in succession the three parts of this formula, in order to penetrate the Arcanum of "active relaxation" or "effort without effort".

Firstly – "learn at first concentration without effort". – What is this in a practical and theoretical sense?

Concentration, as the faculty of fixing maximum attention on a minimum amount of space (Schiller said that he who wants to complete something of worth and of skill, "der sammle still und unerschlafft, die kleinsten Punkt die grösste Kraft", i.e. that "quietly and unceasingly he directs the greatest force upon the smallest point"), is the practical key to all success in every domain. Modern pedagogy and psychotherapy, the schools of prayer and spiritual exercises – Franciscan, Carmelite, Dominican and Jesuit – occult schools of every type and, lastly, ancient Hindu Yoga, all approaches are in agreement about this. Patanjali, in his classic work on Yoga, formulates in his first sentence the practical and theoretical essence of Yoga – the "first arcanum" or the key of Yoga – as follows :- "Yoga citta vritti nirodha" – "Yoga is the suppression of the oscillations of the mental substance" (Yoga Sutras 1.2) – or, in other terms, the art of concentration. For the "oscillations" (vritti) of the "mental substance" (citta) take

place automatically. This automatism in the movements of thought and imagination is the opposite of concentration. Now, concentration is only possible in a condition of c a l m and s i l e n c e, at the expense of the automatism of thought and imagination.

The "to be s i l e n t" therefore precedes the "to k n o w", the "to w i l l" and the "to d a r e". This is why the Pythagorean school prescribed five years silence to beginners or "hearers". One dared to speak there only when one k n e w and w a s a b l e t o, after having mastered the art of being silent — that is to say, the art of concentration. The prerogative "to speak" belonged to those who no longer spoke automatically, driven by the game of the intellect and imagination, but who were able to suppress it owing to the practice of interior and exterior silence, and who knew what they were saying — again thanks to the same practice. The "s i l e n t i u m" practiced by Trappist monks and prescribed for the time of "retreat", generally to all those there who are taking part, is only the application of the same true law: "Yoga is the suppression of the oscillations of the mental substance" or "concentration is the willed silence of the automatism of the intellect and imagination". —

There are nevertheless two sorts of concentration to be distinguished, which are essentially different. The one is disinterested concentration and the other is interested concentration. The first is due to the will free of enslaving passions, obsessions and attachments, whereas the other is the result of a dominating passion, obsession or attachment. A monk absorbed in prayer and an enraged bull are, the one and the other, concentrated. But the one is in the peace of contemplation whilst the other is carried away by rage. Strong passions therefore realize themselves as a high degree of concentration. Thus, gluttons, misers, arrogant people and maniacs occasionally achieve a remarkable concentration. But, truth to tell, it is not a matter of concentration but rather obsession in connection with such people.

True concentration is a free act in light and in peace. It presupposes a disinterested and detached will. For it is the condition of the will which is the determining and decisive factor in concentration. This is why Yoga, for example, demands the practice of Yama and Niyama (yama — the five rules of moral conduct; niyama — the five rules of mortification) before the preparation of the body (through respiration and posture) for concentration and the practice of the three degrees of concentration itself (dharana, dyana, samadhi — concentration, meditation, and contemplation).

Both St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila do not tire of repeating that the concentration necessary for spiritual prayer is the fruit of moral purification of the will.

It is therefore useless to strive to concentrate oneself if the will is infatuated with something else. The "oscillations of the mental substance" will never be able to be reduced to silence if the will itself does not infuse them with its silence. It is the silenced will which effects the silence of thought and imagination in concentration.

This is why the great ascetics are also the great masters of concentration.

All this is obvious and stands to reason. However, what occupies us here is not just concentration in general but particularly and especially concentration without effort. What is this?

Look at a tightrope walker. He is evidently completely concentrated, because if he were not, he would fall to the ground. His life is at stake, and it is only perfect concentration which can save him.

Yet do you believe that his thought and his imagination are occupied with what he is doing? Do you think that he reflects and that he imagines, that he calculates and that he makes plans with regard to each step that he makes on the rope?

If he were to do that, he would fall immediately. He has to eliminate all activity of the intellect and of the imagination in order to avoid a fall. He must have suppressed the "oscillations of the mental substance" in order to be able to exercise his skill. It is the intelligence of his rhythmic system — the respiratory and circulatory system — which replaces that of his brain during his acrobatic exercises. In the last analysis, it is a matter of a miracle — analogous to that of St. Dionysius, apostle of the Gauls and first bishop of Paris, whom tradition identifies with St. Dionysius the Areopagite, the disciple of St. Paul. In particular, he was "beheaded with the sword before the statue of Mercury, confessing his faith in the Holy Trinity. And at once the body of Dionysius stood erect, and took his head in its hands; and with an Angel guiding it and a great light going before, it walked for two miles, from the place called Montmartre to the place where, by its own choice and by the providence of God, it now reposes." (Jacobus de Voragine, "Legenda aurea"; trsl. G. Ryan and H. Ripperger, "The Golden Legend", New York, 1948, pp. 620-621). Now, the tightrope walker, he too has the "head" — that is to say, the intellect and the imagination — severed for the time of the exercise of his skill, and he also walks from one point to another, carrying his head in his hands, under the guidance of another intelligence than that of his head, which acts through the body's rhythmic system.

For the tightrope walker, the juggler, and the magician, their skill and ability are, fundamentally, analogous to the miracle of St. Dionysius; because with them as with St. Dionysius, it is a matter of transposing the center of directing consciousness from the head to the chest - from the cerebral system to the rhythmic system.

Now, concentration without effort is the transposition of the directing center of the brain to the rhythmic system — from the domain of the mind and imagination to that of morality and the will. The great hat in the form of a lemniscate which the Magician wears, like his attitude of perfect ease, indicates this transposition. For the lemniscate (the horizontal eight: ∞) is not only the symbol of infinity, but also that of rhythm, of the respiration and circulation — it is the symbol of eternal

rhythm or the eternity of rhythm.

The Magician therefore represents the state of concentration without effort, i.e. the state of consciousness where the center directing the will has "descended" (in reality it is "elevated") from the brain to the rhythmic system, where the "oscillations of the mental substance" are reduced to silence and to rest, no longer hindering concentration.

Concentration without effort – that is to say where there is nothing to suppress and where contemplation becomes as natural as breathing and the beating of the heart – is the state of consciousness (i.e. thought, imagination, feeling and will) of perfect calm, accompanied by the complete relaxation of the nerves and the muscles of the body. It is the profound silence of desires, of preoccupations, of the imagination, of the memory and of discursive thought. One may say that the entire being becomes like the surface of calm water, reflecting the immense presence of the starry sky and its indescribable harmony. And the waters are deep, they are so deep! – And the silence grows, ever increasing, what s i l e n c e ! Its growth takes place through regular waves which pass, one after the other, through your being: one wave of silence followed by another wave of more profound silence, then again a wave of still more profound silence... Have you ever drunk silence? If in the affirmative, you know what concentration without effort is.

To begin with, there are moments, subsequently minutes, then "quarters of an hour" for which complete silence or "concentration without effort" lasts. With time, the silence or concentration without effort becomes a fundamental element always present in the life of the soul. It is like the perpetual service at the church of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre which takes place, while in Paris one works, one trades, one amuses oneself, one sleeps, one dies... It is in like manner that a "perpetual service" of silence is established in the soul, which continues all the same when one is active, when one works, or when one converses.

This "zone of silence" being once established, you can draw from it both for rest and for work. Then you will have not only concentration without effort, but also activity without effort. And this is precisely what comes to expression in the second part of our formula:

t r a n s f o r m w o r k i n t o p l a y

The changing of work, which is duty, into p l a y, is effected as a consequence of the presence of the "zone of perpetual silence", where one draws from a sort of secret and intimate respiration – whose sweetness and freshness accomplish the anointing of work and transforms it into p l a y.

For the "zone of silence" does not only signify that the soul is, fundamentally, at rest, but also, and rather, that there is contact with the heavenly or spiritual world, which works together with the soul. He who finds silence in the solitude of concentration without effort, is never alone. He never bears alone the weights that he has to carry; the forces of heaven, the forces from on high, are there taking part from now on.

In this way the truth stated by the third part of the formula: make every

yoke that you have accepted easy and every burden that you carry light – itself becomes e x p e r i e n c e. For silence is the sign of real contact with the spiritual world and this contact, in turn, always engenders the influx of forces. This is the foundation of all mysticism, all gnosis, all magic and all practical esotericism in general.

All practical esotericism is founded on the following rule:-

It is necessary to be o n e in oneself (concentration without effort) and o n e with the spiritual world (to have a zone of silence in the soul) in order for a revelatory or actual spiritual experience to be able to take place.

In other words – if one wants to practice some form of authentic esotericism – be it mysticism, gnosis, or magic – it is necessary to be the "Magician", i.e. concentrated without effort, operating with ease as if one were playing, and acting with perfect calm.

This, then, is the practical teaching of the first Arcanum of the Tarot. It is the first counsel, commandment or warning concerning all spiritual practice; it is the a l e p h of the "alphabet" of practical rules of esotericism. And just as all numbers are only aspects (multiples) of unity, so are all other practical rules communicated by the other Arcana of the Tarot only aspects and modalities of this basic rule.

Such is the practical teaching of the "Magician".

What is its theoretical teaching?

It corresponds in every point to the practical teaching, its theoretical operation being only the mental aspect of the practice. Just as the latter proceeds from concentration without effort, i.e. puts unity into practice, so does the attendant theory consist in the basic unity of the natural world, the human world and the divine world. The tenet of the basic oneness of the world plays the same fundamental role for all theory as that of concentration for all practice. As concentration is the basis of every practical achievement, the tenet of the basic unity of the world is the same with regard to all knowledge – without it no knowledge is conceivable.

The tenet of the essential unity of all that exists precedes every act of knowledge, and every act of knowledge presupposes the tenet of the unity of the world. The ideal – or ultimate aim – of all philosophy and all science is T R U T H. But "truth" has no other meaning than that of the reduction of the plurality of phenomena to an essential unity – of facts to laws, of laws to principles, of principles to essence or being. All search for truth – mystical, gnostic, philosophical and scientific – p o s t u l a t e s its existence, i.e. the fundamental unity of the multiplicity of phenomena in the world. Without this unity nothing would be knowable. How could one proceed from the known to the unknown – and this is indeed the method of progress in knowledge – if the unknown had nothing to do with the known? If the unknown had no relationship with the known and was absolutely and essentially a stranger to it? When we say that the world is knowable – i.e. that knowledge as such exists – we state through this fact itself the tenet of the essential unity of the world or its knowability. We declare that the world is not a mosaic, where a plurality of worlds which are essentially strangers to one another are fitted together, but

that it is an organism – all of whose parts are governed by the same principle, revealing it and allowing reduction to it. The relationship of everything and of all beings is the "conditio sine qua non" of their knowability.

The open recognition of the relationship of all things and beings has engendered an exactly corresponding method of knowledge. It is the method generally known under the title "THE METHOD OF ANALOGY"; its role and its import in so-called "occult" science has been illumined in an admirable way by P a p u s in his "Traité élémentaire de science occulte" (Paris, 1888 pp. 28ff.). Analogy is not a tenet or postulate – the essential unity of the world is this –, but is the first and principal method (the aleph of the alphabet of methods) whose use facilitates the advance of knowledge. It is the first conclusion drawn from the tenet of universal unity. Since at the root of the diversity of phenomena their unity is found, in such a way that they are at one and the same time different and one, they are neither identical nor heterogeneous but are analogous in so far as they manifest their essential kinship.

The traditional formula setting forth the method of analogy is well known. It is the second verse of the EMERALD TABLE (T a b u l a S m a r a g d i n a) of Hermes Trismegistus:

> "Quod superius est sicut quod inferius, et quod inferius est sicut quod est superius, ad perpetranda miracula Rei Unius" :- "That which is above is like to that which is below and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of (the) one thing (or the miracles of Unity)". (Tabula Smaragdina, 2; trsl. R. Steele and D.W. Singer, "Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine" xxi, 1928, p. 42; see the Appendix to this Letter concerning the problem of the authenticity of the Tabula Smaragdina).

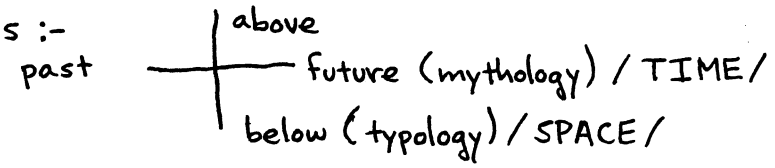
This is the classic formula of analogy for all that exists in space, above and below; the formula of analogy applied in time would be:-

> "Quod fuit est sicut quod erit, et quod erit est sicut quod fuit, ad perpentranda miracula aeternitatis." :- "That which was is as that which will be, and that which will be is as that which was, to accomplish the miracles of Eternity."

The formula of analogy applied in space is the basis of typological symbolism, that is, of symbols expressing correspondences between prototypes above and their manifestations below; the formula of analogy applied in time is the basis of mythological symbolism, that is, of symbols expressing correspondences between archetypes in the past and their manifestations in the present. Thus the Magician is a typological symbol; he reveals to us the prototype of the MAN OF SPIRIT. While the Biblical accounts of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, and if you wish, also, the "Schisme d'Irschou" of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre (cf. "Mission des Juifs", vol. ii, Paris, 1956, pp. 191ff.) are, on the other hand, myths; they reveal the archetypes which manifest themselves endlessly in history and in each individual biography – they are mythological symbols pertaining to the domain of time.

These two categories of symbolism, based on analogy, constitute through their

mutual relationship a c r o s s :-



Here is something written on myth (i.e. on the symbolism of time, or history, according to our definition) by Hans Leisegang, the author of a classic book on G n o s i s : "Every myth expresses, in a form narrated for a particular case, an eternal idea, which will be intuitively recognized by he who re-experiences the content of the myth." (Hans Leisegang, "Die Gnosis", Leipzig, 1924, p.51)

And this is what Marc Haven says concerning typological symbols in the chapter on symbolism in his posthumous book "Le Tarot" (1937) :-

> "Our sensations, symbolizing external movement, do not resemble them (i.e. the phenomena) any more than the undulations of sand in the desert resemble the wind which raises it up into sand dunes, or any more than the ebb and flow of the sea resembles the combined movements of the sun and moon. They are symbols of it... The opinion of Kant, Hamilton and Spencer, which reduces inner movements to simple symbols of a hidden reality is truer and more rational (than naive realism — author's note). Science ought to resign itself to being only a symbolism conscious of itself.... But the symbolic has quite another significance: the "science of sciences" as it was called by the ancients (cf. Decourcelle, "Traité des symboles", Paris, 1806), the universal and divine language, which proclaims and proves the hierarchy of forms from the archetypal world down to the material world and the relationships which unite them; it is, in a word, the living and tangible proof of the kinship of beings." (Marc Haven, "Le Tarot", Lyons, 1937, pp. 19-20, 24)

Above, therefore, two definitions — of symbols of time or of myths, and of that of space or of the correspondence of worlds "from the archetypal world down to the material world" — are formulated, the one by a German savant (Hans Leisegang) at Leipzig in 1924 and the other by a French Hermeticist (Marc Haven) at Lyons in 1906, which express exactly the ideas of the two types of symbolism (mythological and typological) which we are setting forward here.

The "Emerald Table" only alludes to typological symbolism or space — analogy between that which is "above" and that which is "below". This is why it is necessary to add to it, by extension, the corresponding formula pertaining to mythological symbolism or time, which we find, for example, in the book of Genesis of Moses.

The distinction of these two forms of symbolism is not entirely devoid of practical import; it is owing to their confusion that many errors of interpretation of ancient sources, including the Bible, must be attributed. Thus, for example, certain authors take the Biblical account of Cain and Abel as a typological symbol. They want to see in it symbols of "centrifugal and centripetal forces" etc. However, the story of Cain and

Abel is a m y t h, i.e. it expresses, in a form narrated for a particular case, an "eternal" idea. Consequently, it refers to time, to history, and not to space and its structure. It shows us how brothers can become mortal enemies through the very fact that they worship the same God in the same way. The source of religious wars is revealed here; and it is not the difference in dogma nor that of cult or ritual which is the cause, but uniquely the pretention to equality or, if one prefers, the negation of hierarchy. Here also is the world's first revolution — the archetype (Goethe's "Urphänomen") of all revolutions which have taken place and which will take place in the future of humanity. For the cause of all wars and revolutions — in a word, of all violence -- is always the same: the negation of hierarchy. This cause is found already, germinally, at such a lofty level as that of the communal act of worship of the same God by two brothers — this is the staggering revelation of the story of Cain and Abel. And as murders, wars and revolutions continue, the story of Cain and Abel remains ever valid and relevant. Being always valid and relevant throughout the passage of centuries, this is a m y t h and, moreover, a myth of the first order.

It is the same with the accounts of the Fall of Adam and Eve, the Deluge and Noah's ark, the Tower of Babel, etc. These are myths, i.e. in the first place historical symbols referring to time, and not symbols expressing the unity of the worlds in physical, metaphysical and moral space. The Fall of Adam and Eve does not reveal a corresponding fall in the divine world, within the womb of the Holy Trinity. Neither does it express directly the metaphysical structure of the archetypal world. It is a particular event in the terrestrial history of mankind whose importance will cease only with the end of human history; in a word it is a true myth.

On the other hand it would be erroneous to interpret, for example, the vision of Ezekiel, the Merkabah, as a myth. The vision of the celestial Chariot is a symbolic revelation of the archetypal world. It is a typological symbol — it is that which furthermore, the author of the ZOHAR so well understood, which is why he took the vision of Ezekiel as the central symbol of cosmic knowledge — according to the rule of analogy that that which is above is as that which is below.

For the Zohar knows this rule well. Not only does it make implicit use of it, but also it gives it an explicit expression. It is thus that we read in the ZOHAR :-- "For as it is above so it is below: as all the supernal "days" are filled with blessing by the (heavenly) Man, so are the days here below filled with blessing through the agency of Man (i.e. the righteous)." ("Waera", Zohar 25a)

India also has her version of the Hermetic maxim. Thus the VISHVASARA TANTRA states the formula :- "What is here is there. What is not here is nowhere." (Vishvasara Tantra; trsl. Arthur Avalon, "The Serpent Power", London, 1919, p. 72)

The use of analogy is not limited, however, to the "accursed sciences" — magic, astrology and alchemy — and to speculative mysticism. It is, truth to tell, universal. For

neither philosophy, nor theology, nor science itself can do without it.

Here is the role that analogy plays in the logic which is the basis of philosophy and the sciences:-

1) The procedure of classification of objects on the basis of their resemblance is the first step on the way of research by the inductive method. It presupposes the analogy of objects to be classified.

2) Analogy (argument by analogy) can constitute the basis of hypotheses. Thus the famous "nebular hypothesis" of Laplace was due to the analogy that he observed in the direction of the circular movement of the planets around the sun, the movement of satellites around the planets, and the rotation of the planets about their axes. He concluded therefore, from the analogy manifesting itself in these movements, their common origin.

3) As J. Maynard KEYNES says in his "A Treatise on Probability":- "Scientific method, indeed, is mainly devoted to discovering means of so heightening the known analogy that we may dispense as far as possible with the methods of pure induction."-- (J. Maynard Keynes, "A Treatise on Probability", London, 1921, p. 241)

Now, "pure induction" is founded on simple enumeration and is essentially only conclusion based on the experience of given statistics. Thus one could say: As John is a man and is dead, and as Peter is a man and is dead, and as Michael is a man and is dead, therefore man is mortal.-- The force of this argument depends on number or on the quantity of facts known through experience. The method of analogy, on the other hand, adds the qualitative element, i.e. that which is of intrinsic importance, to the quantitative. Here is an example of an argument by analogy:- "Andrew is formed from matter, energy and consciousness. As matter does not disappear with his death, but only changes its form, and as energy does not disappear but only modifies the mode of its activity, Andrew's consciousness, also, cannot simply disappear, but must merely change its form and mode (or plane) of activity. Therefore Andrew is i m m o r t a l."

This latter argument is founded on the formula of Hermes Trismegistus: that which is below (matter)(energy) is as that which is above (consciousness). Now, if there exists a law of conservation of matter and energy (although matter transforms itself into energy and vice versa), there must necessarily exist a law of conservation of consciousness, or immortality.

The ideal of science, according to Keynes, is to find the means to elaborate the scope of known analogy so far as to be able to do without the hypothetical method of pure induction, i.e. to transform the scientific method into pure analogy, based on pure experience, without the hypothetical elements immanent in pure induction. Now, it is by virtue of the method of analogy that science makes discoveries (in passing from the known to the unknown), formulates fruitful hypotheses, and pursues a methodical, directing aim. Analogy is its beginning and its end, its alpha and its omega.

In that which concerns speculative philosophy or metaphysics, the same role is

reserved there for analogy. All conclusions of a metaphysical nature are based only on the analogy of man, Nature and the intelligible or metaphysical world. Thus the two principal authorities of the most methodical and most disciplined philosophy — medieval Scholastic philosophy — St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura (of whom one represents Aristotelianism and the other Platonism in Christian philosophy) not only make use of analogy but also assign it a very important theoretical role in their doctrines themselves. St. Thomas advances the doctrine of "analogia entis", the analogy of being, which is the principal key to his philosophy. St. Bonaventura, in his doctrine of "signatura rerum", interprets the entire visible world as the symbol of the invisible world. For him, the visible world is only another Holy Scripture, another revelation alongside that which is contained in the Holy Scripture properly said:

> "Et sic patet quod totus mundus est sicut unum speculum plenum luminibus praesentantibus divinam sapientiam, et sicut carbo effundens lucem." - "And thus it appears that the entire world is like a single mirror full of lights presenting the divine wisdom, or as charcoal emitting light." (Bonaventura, "Collationes in Hexaemeron ii, 27)

Now, St. Thomas and St. Bonaventura have been proclaimed (by Sixtus V in 1588, and again in 1879 by Leo XIII) "duae olivae et duo candelabra in domo Dei lucentia" - "two olive trees and two chandeliers shining in the house of God".

You see therefore, dear Unknown Friend, that we are able, you and I, to declare openly our faith in analogy and proclaim aloud the formula of the "Emerald Table", consecrated by tradition, without appearing thereby to be infidels to philosophy, science, and the official doctrines of the Church. We are able to use it in good conscience as philosophers, as scientists and as Catholics. There is nothing to be said against it according to these three points of view.

But the sanction accorded to analogy does not stop here: the Master Himself has endorsed it by the use which He made of it. As well as the parables, the "a fortiori" argument which He made use of in His sayings demonstrates it. The parables, which are "ad hoc" symbols, would be devoid of sense and purpose, if they were not statements of analogous truths made in the language of analogy and making appeal to the sense of analogy.

With respect to the argument "a fortiori", its entire strength lies in analogy which is its foundation. Here is an example of an "a fortiori" argument employed by the Master:

> "What man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, <u>how much more</u> will your Father who is

in heaven give good things to those who ask him." (Matthew vii, 9-11) Here we have the analogy of terrestrial kinship (human) to celestial kinship (divine), on which is founded the force of the "a fortiori" argument, where "how much more" is the result of imperfect manifestation in relation to the ideal prototype. The analogy of father and Father is the essence here.

At this point, a feeling of unease could arise in the conscientious reader: "There are many arguments and authorities cited <u>in support of</u> the method of analogy, but what is there here as an argument <u>against</u> this method, as regarding its weaknesses and dangers?

Well, it must be acknowledged quite plainly and frankly that the method of analogy presents many negative sides and many dangers, errors and serious illusions. This is because it is entirely founded on <u>experience</u>; and all superficial, incomplete or false experience is bound to give rise to superficial, incomplete or false conclusions, by analogy, in a direction parallel with the experience from which they are the outcome. Thus in making use of insufficiently powerful telescopes "canals" were seen on Mars — straight, continuous lines — where it was inferred by analogy that these "canals" must be artificial and that consequently the planet was inhabited by civilized beings. Now, the subsequent perfecting of telescopes and exact observation has demonstrated that the "canals" are not at all continuous, but that they display breaks, and are not rectilinear as they first appeared. The argument by analogy therefore loses its value in this case, owing to the error of experience on which it was based.

With respect to the occult sciences, Gerard van Rijnberk has published (cf. "Le Tarot", Lyons, 1947, p.203) a table of astrological "correspondences" of the Tarot according to different authors. There, for example, the seventh card — "The Chariot" — corresponds to the sign Gemini (according to Etteila), to Sagittarius (according to Fomalhaut), to Gemini (according to Shoral), to Sagittarius (according to an anonymous author), to the planet Mars (according to Basilide), to the planet Venus (according to Volguine), to the Sun (according to Ely Star), to the sign of Libra (according to Snijders), to the planet Venus (according to Muchery), to the sign of Cancer (according to Crowley), and to the sign of Gemini (according to Kurtzahn).

Here the relativity of the correspondences obtained by means of the method of analogy is readily apparent.

But, on the other hand, the concordance of correspondences between the metals and the planets, obtained by the same method, is maintained by ancient, medieval and modern authors. Greek astrologers of the 4th century B.C., continuing the Babylonian tradition, where gold corresponds to the Sun and to the god Enlil, and silver to the Moon and to the god Anu, accepted the following correspondences: Gold-Sun, Silver-Moon, Lead-Saturn, Tin-Jupiter, Iron-Mars, Copper-Venus, and

Mercury – Mercury (cf. E. J. HOLMYARD, "Alchemy", London, 1957, pp. 18-19). * The same correspondences were accepted by astrologers and alchemists of the Middle Ages, and again today by all authors in the occult sciences and in Hermeticism (including Rudolf Steiner and other anthroposophical authors), which correspondences you will find in the book by PAPUS, "Traité Élémentaire de Science Occulte" (Paris, 1888 p. 145).

On the subject of the universality of these analogous correspondences between the planets and metals, I may add that the 44 years of my studies and experiences in this domain have not led me to modify anything in the table of given correspondences and that, on the contrary, they have supplied numerous proofs — direct and indirect — which have confirmed their truth.

It must be concluded, therefore, that the method of analogy on the one hand is in no way infallible but on the other hand it is qualified to lead to the discovery of essential truths. Its effectiveness and value depend on the fullness and exactitude of the experience upon which it is based.

Let us return now to the Arcanum "THE MAGICIAN".

As concentration without effort finds expression in the whole picture of the Card – as well as in all its details – and thus constitutes the practical Arcanum here, one also finds expressed in it the method of analogy, which constitutes the theoretical Arcanum. For, seen from the level of the intellect, the practice of the method of analogy corresponds completely to the practice of concentration without effort. Also, it appears there not as "work" but rather as "p l a y".

The practice of analogy on the intellectual plane of consciousness does not, in fact, demand any effort; either one perceives ("sees") analogous correspondences or one

* Translator's note: E. J. Holmyard's research concerning the planetary metals, cited here by the author, stands in need of some modification. The list of correspondences between the planets and the metals given by Holmyard is the standard one found in Arabic alchemical texts. It is also referred to by the Christian astrologer Theophilus of Edessa, who lived in Baghdad in the eighth century A.D. (cf. Arthur Ludwich, "Anecdota astrologica", Leipzig, 1877, p. 121). This list is almost identical to the earliest known list of the planetary metals, that of the second century A.D. Greek astrologer Vettius Valens (cf. "Anthologiarum" i, 1; ed. W. Kroll, Berlin, 1908), with the exception that Valens gives electrum (an alloy of gold and silver) as the metal corresponding to Mercury, instead of quicksilver. It is possible that the Arabic alchemical tradition took over the correspondences between the planets and metals from the Greek astrological tradition, and later substituted quicksilver for electrum. (It is not surprising that quicksilver is not mentioned by Vettius Valens, as its distillation became established only later – at some time around the fourth century A.D.).

does not perceive or "see" them.

Just as the magician or juggler has had to train and work for a long time before attaining the ability of concentration without effort, similarly he who makes use of the method of analogy on the intellectual plane must have worked much — i.e. to have acquired long experience and to have accumulated the teachings which it requires — before attaining the faculty of immediate perception of analogous correspondences, before becoming a "magician" or "juggler" who makes use of the analogy of beings and of things without effort as in a game. This faculty constitutes an essential part of the realization of the task that the Master charged his disciples with: "Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a c h i l d shall not enter it" (Mark, x, 15).

The little c h i l d does not "work" — he p l a y s. But how serious he is, i.e. how concentrated, when he plays! His attention is <u>still</u> complete and undivided, whereas with he who approaches the kingdom of God it becomes <u>again</u> entire and undivided. And this is the Arcanum of intellectual geniality :- the vision of the unity of beings and things through the immediate perception of their correspondences — through consciousness concentrated without effort.

The Master did not want us to become puerile; what he wanted is that we attain the geniality of intelligence and heart which is <u>analogous</u> - not identical - to the attitude of the child, who carries only easy burdens and renders all his yokes light.

The Magician represents the man who has attained harmony and equilibrium between the spontaneity of the Unconscious (in the sense given to it by C. G. JUNG) and the deliberate action of the Conscious (in the sense of "I" or ego-consciousness).

His state of consciousness is the <u>synthesis</u> of the Conscious and the Unconscious — of creative spontaneity and deliberately executed activity. It is the state of consciousness that the psychological school of C.G. JUNG calls "individuation", or "synthesis of the conscious and unconscious" (the two elements in the personality), or.. " s y n t h e s i s of the s e l f " (C.G. Jung and C. Kerényi, "Introduction to a Science of Mythology"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, London, 1951, p.115).

This synthesis renders possible concentration without effort and intellectual vision without effort, which are the practical and theoretical aspects of all fruitfulness in both practical and intellectual realms.

Friedrich SCHILLER seems to have had consciousness of this Arcanum when he advanced his doctrine of the synthesis between intellectual consciousness, imposing heavy burdens of duties and of rules, and... the instinctive nature of man, in the "S p e i l t r e i b" (the urge to play). The "true" and the "desired" must, according to him, find their synthesis in the "beautiful", for it is only in the

beautiful that the "Speiltreib" renders the burden of the "true" or the "just" light and raises at the same time the darkness of instinctive forces to the level of light and consciousness (cf. Friedrich Schiller, "Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man"; trsl. E.M. Wilkinson and L.A. Willoughby, Oxford, 1967, pp. 331-332, note). In other words, he who sees the beauty of that which he recognizes as true cannot fail to love it — and in loving it the element of constraint in the duty prescribed by the true will disappear: duty becomes a delight. It is thus that "work" is transformed into "play" and concentration without effort becomes possible.

But the first Arcanum, the Arcanum of practical and theoretical fruitfulness, while proclaiming the effectiveness of serious play (which is the complete Tarot) contains at the same time a serious warning:- there is Play and play, there is the Magician and the magician; this is why anyone who confuses lack of concentration with concentration without effort, and streams of simple mental associations with the vision without effort of correspondences by analogy, will necessarily become a charlatan.

The Arcanum of the Magician is twofold. It has two aspects: he invites us on the path which leads to geniality; and he warns us of the danger of the path which leads to charlatanism.

I must add that often — too often, alas! — the teachers of occultism follow the two paths at the same time and that which they teach contains elements of genius mixed with elements of charlatanism. May the first Arcanum of the Tarot be always present before us as a kind of "guardian of the threshold"; may he invite us to cross the threshold of work and effort in order to enter into activity without effort, and knowledge without effort, but may he at the same time warn us that the more we go beyond the threshold, the more work, effort and experience on this side of the threshold will be indispensable for the attainment of real truth. May the Magician say to us, and may he repeat it each day: "To perceive and to know, to try and to be able to, are all different things. There are mirages above, as there are mirages below; you only know that which is verified by the agreement of all forms of experience in its totality — experience of the senses, moral experience, psychic experience, the collective experience of other seekers for the truth, and finally the experience of those whose knowing merits the title of wisdom and whose striving has been crowned by the title of saint. Academia and the Church stipulate methodical and moral conditions for one who desires to progress. Carry them out strictly, before and after each flight into the region beyond the domain

of work and effort. If you do this, you will be a sage and a mage. If you do not do this – you will be only a charlatan!" ----

Appendix to the 1st Letter:--

I. Historical note concerning the "EMERALD TABLE": Here is the Latin text of the Emerald Table, known since the time of Albertus Magnus, as given by Julius Ruska, "Tabula Smaragdina" (Heidelberg, 1926), p. 2:

Versio Tabulae Smaragdinae Hermetis
Qualis ea vulgo Latino Idiomate, e Phoenicio expressa circumfertur

Verba secretorum Hermetis Trismegisti

1. Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum.
2. Quod est inferius, est sicut (id) quod est superius, et quod est superius, est sicut (id) quod est inferius, ad perpetranda [1] miracula rei unius.
3. Et sicut omnes res fuerunt ab uno, meditatione [2] unius: sic omnes res natae fuerunt ab hac una re, adaptione. [3]
4. Pater ejus est Sol, mater ejus Luna; portavit illud ventus in ventre suo; nutrix ejus terra est.
5. Pater omnis thelesmi totius mundi est hic.
6. Vis (virtus) ejus integra est, si versa fuerit in terram.
7. Separabis terram ab igne, subtile a spisso, suaviter, cum magno ingenio.
8. Ascendit a terra in coelum, iterumque descendit in terram, et recepit vim superiorum et inferiorum. Sic habebis gloriam totius mundi. Ideo fugiat (fugiet) a te omnis obscuritas.
9. Hic (haec) est totius fortitudinis fortitudo fortis: quia vincet omnem rem subtilem, omnemque solidam [4] penetrabit.
10. Sic mundus creatus est.
11. Hinc adaptationes erunt mirabiles, quarum modus est hic.
12. Itaque vocatus sum HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, habens tres partes Philosophiae totius mundi.
13. Completum est quod dixi de operatione Solis.

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[1] According to K.C. Schmieder, "Geschichte der Alchemie" (Halle, 1832), p. 30, one meets the variants "penetranda" and "praeparanda".

[2] According to an Arabic manuscript, discovered subsequently, this should read "mediatione".

[3] Another (inexact) variant is "adoptione".

[4] Another variant is "et omne solidum".

The following English translation from the Latin text "Tabula Smaragdina" is based on that by Robert Steele and Dorothy Singer, "Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine" xxi (1928), p.42, who also discuss the manuscript tradition of the text, its content, and the sources of the text (ibid., pp.41-57).

1. True it is, without falsehood, certain and most true.
2. That which is above is like to that which is below, and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of (the) one thing (or Unity).
3. And as all things were by contemplation (meditation) of (the) One, so all things arose from this one thing by a single act of adaptation.
4. The father thereof is the sun; the mother the moon; the wind carried it in its womb; the earth is the nurse thereof.
5. It is the father of all works of wonder (thelema) throughout the whole world.
6. The power thereof is perfect, if it be cast on to earth.
7. It will separate the element of earth from that of fire, the subtle from the gross, gently and with great sagacity.
8. It doth ascend from earth to heaven; again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior. Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee.
9. This thing is the strongest of all powers, the force of all forces, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.
10. Thus was this world created.
11. Hence there will be marvellous adaptations achieved, of which the manner is this.
12. For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I hold three parts of the wisdom of the world.
13. That which I had to say about the operation of <u>sol</u> is completed.

As the above (Latin) text has been known in the Occident only since Albertus Magnus (1193/1206 – 1280) and as no other text or manuscript for an earlier date could be found over the centuries, historians at the beginning of this century were of the opinion that Albertus Magnus was the author of the Emerald Table. It was considered apocryphal not only from the point of view of its authenticity as a work of Hermes Trismegistus, but also from the point of view of its intrinsic authenticity as a work worthy of inclusion in the "Corpus Hermeticum" (= the collection of apocryphal texts from the first centuries of our era attributed to authors writing under the name – or pseudonym – of Hermes Trismegistus). Now, the text of the Emerald Table is not contained in what is considered to be the most complete edition of the "Corpus Hermeticum" – that of Walter Scott, "Hermetica" in 4 volumes (Oxford, 1924). The same remark applies also to "Corpus Hermeticum" edited and translated by Nock and Festugière

(4 volumes; Paris, 1960). Scott wrote the following: - "the masses of rubbish which fall under the... head... of writings concerning astrology, magic, alchemy and kindred forms of pseudo-science... the contents of which are also ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus." (Walter Scott, "Hermetica", Oxford, 1924, vol. i, p.1). The criterion which Scott makes use of to establish if a writing attributed to Hermes Trismegistus is to be included in the "Corpus Hermeticum" or to be rejected is whether it is concerned with religious and philosophical problems or not. In other words, the writings dealing with problems of religion and philosophy belong to the "Corpus Hermeticum", whereas the others are not worthy of inclusion, e.g. those writings concerned with Nature (in a "pseudo-scientific" manner) are to be rejected.

However, Hermes himself says: ...."I bear in mind that many of my writings have been addressed to him (Ammon), as again many of my treatises on Nature ...have been addressed to Tat..."("Asclepius", Prologue; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, p.287) — How can it be permitted to reject all the writings on Nature and consider the sole category ("addressed to Ammon") as authentic, when one has knowledge of the fact that the author of a writing ("Asclepius"), recognized as authentic in the "Corpus Hermeticum", has proclaimed in an explicit manner that he is the author of another category of writings, namely those concerned with Nature?

With respect to the Emerald Table, the affinity of its ideas with those expressed in "Asclepius" are all too apparent. Thus, for example, Hermes says:-

> "(Air) enters into earth and water; and fire rises into air. That only which tends upward is life-giving; and that which tends downward is subservient to it. Moreover, all that descends from on high is generative; and that which issues from below is nutritive. Earth, which alone stands fast in its own place, receives all that is generative into itself, and renders back all that it has received. ("Asclepius"; trsl. W. Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, p.289)

Why should these ideas be considered as more "religious and philosophical" than those of the Emerald Table which also speaks of movements above and below and of generation by Father Sun and Mother Moon, and similarly of the nourishing function of the Earth?

Perhaps because at the time of Walter Scott's researches no other text of the Emerald Table had been found prior to the XIIIth century?

Now, in 1926 the "Heidelberger Akten der Von-Portheim-Stiftung" published a work by Julius RUSKA: "Tabula Smaragdina. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der hermetischen Literatur". This book contains a description of G. BERGSTRÄSSER's manuscript in Arabic. This manuscript comprises 97 folios, of which 25 relate the history of Joseph, 40 contain an alchemical treatise, which includes as a summary the text of the Emerald Table (in Arabic, like the entire manuscript), followed by 32 folios devoted to other subjects, notably particulars concerning the calendar of the prophet Daniel. The alchemical treatise was written by a priest named SAGIJUS of NABULUS — its contents originating from the master BALINAS the WISE (which is the Arabic name for

APOLLONIUS of TYANA), who himself had discovered it in an underground chamber. Here is a rendering in English of the German translation of the Arabic text of the Emerald Table that is given in BERGSTRÄSSER's manuscript (cf. Ruska, pp. 113-114):-

"Here is that which the priest Sagijus of NABULUS has dictated concerning the entrance of Balinas into the hidden chamber (the following words of wisdom were found at the end of the book by Balinas the Wise):-

"After my entrance into the chamber, where the Talisman was set up, I came up to an old man sitting on a golden throne, who was holding an emerald table in one hand. And behold, the following - in Syriac, the primordial language - was written thereon:--

1) Here (is) a true explanation, concerning which there can be no doubt.
2) It attests: The above (comes) from the below, and the below from the above - the work of the miracles of Unity.
3) And things have been (formed) from this primal substance through a single act. How wonderful is this work! It is the main (Principle) of the world and is its maintainer.
4) Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon; the wind has borne it in its body; and the earth has nourished it.
5) (It is) the father of Talismen and the Protector of miracles,
6) whose powers are perfect, and whose lights are confirmed (?),
7) a fire that becomes earth. Separate the earth from the fire, so you will attain the subtle as more inherent than the gross, with care and sagacity.
8) It rises from earth to heaven, so as to draw the lights of the heights to itself, and descends (again) to the earth; thus within it are the forces of the above and the below; because the light of lights (is) within it, thus does the darkness flee before it.
9) (It is) the force of forces, which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates into everything gross.
10) The structure of the small world (microcosm) is in accordance with the structure of the great world (macrocosm).
11) And accordingly proceed the knowledgeable.
12) And to this aspired Hermes, who was threefold graced with Wisdom.
13) And this is his last book, which he concealed in the chamber."

But Julius RUSKA is not the only one to have discovered an Arabic text of the Emerald Table. The author of "Alchemy", E. J. HOLMYARD (Pelican, London, 1957), points out that he found a shortened text of the Emerald Table in Arabic. This text is part of the "Second Book of the Element of the Foundation" by JABIR or GEBER (722-815). Prior to this discovery, made in 1923, only the medieval Latin text was known of. Subsequently, another variant in Arabic was discovered by Ruska in a

book entitled "The Secret of Creation" attributed to Apollonius. Jabir (or Geber) himself, in giving the text of the Emerald Table states that he is quoting Apollonius. Now, KRAUS has shown that "The Secret of Creation" was written, at least in its final edition, during the Caliphate of al-Ma'mun (813-833), and it includes parallels with a book written at this same time by JOB of EDESSA. The latter was a scholar whose translations from Syriac into Arabic merited the praise of even such a severe critic as HUNAIN IBN ISHAQ. Therefore, even if Job did not write "The Secret of Creation", he probably drew from the same, more ancient sources as the author of the said treatise. KRAUS has shown that one of these sources was the writings of NEMESIUS, bishop of EMESA (Homs) in Syria during the 2nd half of the 4th century A.D. Nemesius wrote in Greek, but his book "On the Nature of Man" does not contain the text of the Table. To summarize, it can be concluded that the most ancient rendering of the Table that is known, namely that in Arabic, was probably translated from Syriac, but this can equally well have been based on an original Greek text. Whether this original dates back to the time of Apollonius is an insoluble problem (cf. Ruska, op. cit., pp. 78-79, pp. 96-97).

The present state of historical studies on the Emerald Table is therefore as follows:- it was known in Arabic as a translation from Syriac at the beginning of the IXth century; two variants in Arabic are extant; there is no reason to reject the Arabic tradition that it was translated from Syriac, or for that matter the tradition that it originated with Apollonius.

One could add that if there is no reason to doubt that it originated with Apollonius, there is no more reason to reject the tradition that Apollonius in his turn found it in the manner described by the priest SAGIJUS of NABULUS.

Be that as it may, it is immediately apparent that the Table is of a considerably more ancient origin than was believed up to 1923, and consequently there is room to reconsider the opinion that it is not worthy of inclusion in the "Corpus Hermeticum".

For our part, we have every reason – subjective as well as objective – sufficient for us "in foro interno" (i.e. in good conscience) to be sure that the "Emerald Table" is without doubt the only absolutely authentic fragment in the whole "Corpus Hermeticum". And this, moreover, in the sense that its author is neither the "third Hermes" nor the "second", but actually the f i r s t – that is to say the founder of the Hermetic tradition as such – in which tradition the principal links (according to FICINO, writing in 1471) are: Hermes Trismegistus – Orpheus – Pythagoras – Philolaus ("Divi Platonis nostri praeceptor") – Plato – the Neopythagoreans (Apollonius) – the Neoplatonists (Plotinus).

Letter II: Meditation on the second Major Arcanum of the Tarot -- "THE HIGH PRIESTESS" "LA PAPESSE"

Wisdom has built her house,
She has set up her seven pillars.
(Proverbs ix, 1)

Dear Unknown Friend,

As set forth in the preceding Letter, the Magician is the arcanum of intellectual geniality and cordiality, the arcanum of <u>true spontaneity</u>. Concentration without effort and the perception of correspondences in accordance with the law of analogy are the principal implications of this arcanum of spiritual fecundity. It is the arcanum of the <u>pure act</u> of intelligence.

But the pure act is like fire or wind: it appears and disappears, and when exhausted it gives way to another act.

> "The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit." (John iii, 8)

The pure act in itself cannot be grasped; it is only its <u>reflection</u> which renders it perceptible, comparable and understandable or, in other words, it is by virtue of the reflection that we become conscious of it. The reflection of the pure act produces an inner representation, which becomes retained by the memory; memory becomes the source of communication by means of the spoken word; and the communicated word becomes fixed by means of writing, by producing the "book".

The second Arcanum, "The High Priestess" is that of the reflection of the pure act of the first Arcanum up to the point where it becomes "Book". It shows us how Fire and Wind become Science and Book. Or, in other words, how "Wisdom builds her house".

As we have pointed out, one becomes conscious of the pure act of intelligence only by means of its reflection. We require an inner "mirror" in order to be conscious of the pure act or to know "whence it comes or whither it goes". The breath of the Spirit – or the pure act of intelligence – is certainly an event, but it does not suffice, itself alone, for us to become conscious of it. "Con-sciousness" (con-science in French) is the result of two principles – the active, activating principle and the passive, reflecting principle. In order to "know" from where the breath of the Spirit comes and where it goes, Water is required to reflect it. This is why the conversation of the Master with Nicodemus, to which we have referred, enunciates the absolute condition for the <u>conscious</u> experience of the Divine Breath – or the Kingdom of God:

> "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God" (John iii, 5)

"Truly, truly" – the Master refers here twice to "truth" in this mantric (i.e. magical) formula of the reality of con-sciousness. By these words he states that full consciousness of the truth is the result of "inbreathed" truth and reflected truth. Reintegrated consciousness, which is the Kingdom of God, presupposes two renovations, of a significance comparable to birth, in the two constituent elements of consciousness – active Spirit and reflecting Water. Spirit must become divine Breath in place of arbitrary, personal activity, and Water must become a perfect mirror of the divine Breath instead of being agitated by disturbances of the imagination, passions and personal desires. Reintegrated consciousness must be born of Water and Spirit, after Water has once again become Virginal and Spirit has once again become divine Breath or the Holy Spirit. Reintegrated consciousness therefore becomes born within the human soul in a way <u>analogous</u> to the birth or historical incarnation of the WORD:

Et incarnatus est de Spirity Sancto
Ex Maria Virgine
(By the power of the Holy Spirit the Word became incarnate from the Virgin Mary)

The re-birth from Water and Spirit which the Master indicates to Nicodemus is the re-establishment of the state of consciousness prior to the Fall, where the Spirit was divine Breath and where this Breath was reflected by virginal Nature. This is Christian "YOGA". Its aim is not "radical deliverance" ("Mukti"), i.e. the state of consciousness without breath and without reflection, but rather that which is the complete and perfect reponse to divine action – baptism from Water and the Spirit. These two kinds of baptism bring about the reintegration of the two constituent elements of consciousness as such – the active element and the passive element. There is no consciousness without these two elements, and the suppression of this duality by means of a practical method such as that inspired by the ideal of unity ("Advaita" – non-duality) must necessarily lead to the extinction not of being but rather of consciousness. Then this would not be a "new birth" of consciousness, but instead would be its <u>return</u> to the pre-natal embryonic cosmic state.

On the other hand, this is what Plotinus says concerning the duality underlying all forms and every level of consciousness, namely the active principle and its mirror:

"...when the mirror is there, the mirror-image is produced, but when it is not there or is not in the right state, the object of which the image would have been is (all the same) actually there. In the same way as regards the soul, when that kind of thing in us which mirrors the images of thought and intellect is undisturbed, we see them and know them in a way parallel to sense-perception, along with the prior knowledge that it is intellect and thought that are active. But when this is broken because the harmony of the body is upset, thought and intellect operate without an image, and then intellectual activity takes place without a mind-picture." (Plotinus, "Ennead" I, iv, 10; trsl. A. H. Armstrong, London, 1966, pp. 199 and 201)

This is the Platonic conception of consciousness, the thorough study of which can serve by way of introduction to the nocturnal conversation of the Master with Nicodemus on the

reintegration of consciousness or the aim of Christian "yoga".

Christian "Yoga" does not aspire directly to unity, but rather to the unity of two. This is very important for understanding the standpoint which one takes towards the infinitely serious problem of unity and duality. For this problem can open the door to truly divine mysteries and can also close them to us... for ever, perhaps, who knows? Everything depends on its comprehension. We can decide in favor of monism and say to ourselves that there can be only one sole essence, one sole being. Or we can decide – in view of considerable historical and personal experience – in favor of dualism and say to ourselves that there are two principles in the world: good and evil, spirit and matter, and that, entirely incomprehensible though this duality is at root, it must be admitted as an incontestable fact. We can, moreover, decide in favor of a third point of view, namely that of l o v e as the cosmic principle which presupposes duality and postulates its non-substantial but essential unity.

These three points of view are found at the basis of the Vedanta ("Advaita") and Spinozism (Monism), Manichaeism and certain gnostic schools (dualism), and the Judeo-Christian current (L o v e).

In order to give more clarity and precision to this problem, as well as to attain greater depth – we shall take for our point of departure what Louis Claude de SAINT-MARTIN says concerning the number two in his book "Des Nombres" ("On Numbers"):-

> "Now, in order to show how they (numbers) are related to their base of activity, let us begin by observing the working of unity and of the number two. When we contemplate an important truth, such as the universal power of the Creator, his majesty, his love, his profound light, or suchlike attributes, we bear ourselves wholly towards this supreme model of all things; all our faculties are suspended in order to fill us with him, and we really only make ourselves one with him. This is the active image of unity, and the number one in our languages is the expression of this unity or invisible union which, existing intimately between all attributes of this unity, must equally exist between it and all its produced creations. But if, after having born all our faculties of contemplation towards this universal source, we return our gaze to ourselves and fill ourselves with our own contemplation, in such a way that we regard ourselves as the origin of some of the inner light or satisfaction that this source has procured for us, from that moment we establish two centers of contemplation, two separate and rival principles, two bases which are not linked; lastly, we establish two unities, with this difference – that one is real and the other is apparent." (p.2) – Then he adds:- "But to divide being through the middle is to divide it into two parts; it is to pass from the whole to the quality of the part or the half, and it is here that the true origin of illegitimate twofoldness lies... this example is sufficient to show us the birth of the number t w o – to show us the origin of evil..." (p.3). (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Des Nombres", Nice,

1946, pp. 2-3)

Duality therefore signifies the establishment of two centers of contemplation, two separate and rival principles – one real and the other apparent – and this is the origin of evil, which is only i l l e g i t i m a t e t w o f o l d n e s s.

Is this the <u>only</u> possible interpretation of duality, twofoldness, the number <u>two</u>? Does there not exist a <u>legitimate twofoldness</u>? A twofoldness which does not signify the <u>diminution</u> of unity, but rather its qualitative enrichment?

If we return to the conception of Saint-MARTIN of "two centers of contemplation" which are "two separate and rival principles", we can ask ourselves if they must <u>necessarily</u> be separate and rival? Does not the expression "con-templation" itself, chosen by Saint-Martin, suggest the idea of two centers which contemplate simultaneously – as would two eyes if they were placed vertically one above the other – the <u>two</u> aspects of reality, the phenomenal and the noumenal? And that it is by virtue of the two centers or "eyes" that we are – or are able to be – conscious of "that which is above and that which is below"? Could one, for example, enunciate the principal formula of the Emerald Table if one had only one "e y e" or center of contemplation instead of t w o?

Now, the S e p h e r Y e t z i r a h says:-

> "<u>Two</u> is the breath which comes from the Spirit, and formed in it are twenty-two sounds... but the Spirit is first and above these."- (Sepher Yetzirah i,10; trsl. W. Wynn Westcott, London, 1893, p.16)

Or, in other words, t w o is the divine Breath and its Reflection; it is the origin of the "Book of Revelation" which is the world as well as the Holy Scripture. T w o is the number of con-sciousness of the breath of the Spirit and its "formed" (engraved) letters. It is the number of the reintegration of consciousness, signified by the Master to Nicodemus by the virginal Water and the Breath of the Holy Spirit.

T w o is all this and it is even more. Not only is the number <u>two</u> not necessarily the "illegitimate twofoldness" described by Saint-Martin, but also it is the n u m b e r of l o v e or the fundamental condition of love which it necessarily presupposes and postulates, because love is inconceivable without the L o v e r and the L o v e d, without ME and YOU, without O N E and the O T H E R.

If God were only One and if He had not created the World, he would not be the God revealed by the Master, the God of whom St. John says:

> "God <u>is</u> love; and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." (I John iv,16)

He would not be this, because he would love no one other than himself. As this is impossible from the point of view of the God of love, he is revealed to human consciousness as the eternal Trinity – the Loving One who loves, the Loved One who loves, and their Love who loves them: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Do you not also experience, dear Unknown Friend, a feeling of discomfort each time that you encounter a formula stating the higher attributes of the Holy Trinity, such as "Power, Wisdom, Love" or "Being, Consciousness, Beatitude" (Sat-Chit-Ananda)?

Personally, I always experienced this discomfort, and it was only later, many years later, that I understood its cause. It is because God is l o v e, that He admits of no comparison, that He surpasses all – power, wisdom, and even being. One can, if one wishes, speak of the "power of love", the "wisdom of love" and the "life of love" in order to make a distinction between the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, but one cannot put on the same level love on the one hand and wisdom, power and being on the other. For God i s love and it is love – it is only love – which by its presence gives worth to power and to wisdom and to being itself. For <u>being</u> without love is deprived of all worth. Being without love would be the most appalling torment – the Inferno itself!

Does love therefore surpass b e i n g? How could one doubt this after the revelation of of this truth through 19 centuries by the Mystery of Calvary? "That which is below is like to that which is above" – and is not the sacrifice of His life, His terrestrial being, accomplished through love by God Incarnate, is this not the demonstration of the superiority of love over being? And is not the Resurrection the demonstration of the other aspect of the primacy of love over being, i.e. that love is not only superior to being but also that it engenders it and restores it?

The problem of the primacy of being or of love goes back to antiquity. PLATO raised it when he said:-

> "The sun, I presume you will say, not only furnishes to visibles the power of visibility but it also provides for their generation and growth and nurture though it is not itself generation... In like manner, then, you are to say that the objects of knowledge not only receive from the presence of the good their being known, but their very existence and essence is derived to them from it, though the good itself is not essence but still transcends essence in dignity and surpassing power." (Plato, "The Republic", 509 B; trsl. P. Shorey, 2 vols. London, 1930, 1935, vol. ii, p. 107)

And seven centuries later SALLUSTIUS, the friend of Emperor Julian, said:-

> "Now if the First Cause was soul, everything would be animated by soul, if intelligence, everything would be intellectual, if being, everything would share in being. Some in fact, seeing that all things possess being, have thought that the First Cause was being. This would be correct if things that were in being were in being only and were not good. If, however, things that are are by reason of their goodness and share in the good, then what is first must be higher than being and in fact good. A very clear indication of this is that fine souls for the sake of the good despise being, when they are willing to face danger for country or friends or virtue." (Sallustius, "Concerning the Gods and the Universe", v; trsl. A. D. Nock, Cambridge, 1926, p. 11)

The primacy of G o o d ("Good" being the abstract philosophical notion of the <u>reality</u> of love) in relation to being has also been discussed by PLOTINUS ("Enneads" vi, 7, 23-24), by PROCLUS ("In Platonis Theologiam" ii, 4 = "On the Theology of Plato"), and by DIONYSIUS the AREOPAGITE ("De divinus nominibus", iv = "On the Divine Names"). St. BONAVENTURA ("Collationes in Hexaemeron" x, 10) tried to reconcile this Platonic primacy of Good with the

Mosaic primacy of Being: "E g o s u m q u i s u m" ("I am that I am", Exodus iii, 14) – asserted first by John DAMASCENUS (John of Damascus) and then by St. THOMAS AQUINAS. The latter states that amongst all the divine names there is one which is eminently suited to God, and this is Q u i e s t ("He who is"), precisely because it signifies nothing other than being itself. Etienne GILSON, in harmony with St. Thomas, John Damascenus and Moses, writes concerning being: "In this principle lies an inexhaustible metaphysical fecundity... there is but one God and this God is Being, that is the cornerstone of all Christian philosophy, and it was not Plato, it was not even ARISTOTLE, it was MOSES who instituted it." – (Etienne Gilson, "The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy"; trsl. A.H.C. Downes, London, 1950, p.51)

Yet what is the full <u>significance</u> of the adoption of the primacy of b e i n g, instead of that of g o o d, or according to St. JOHN, that of l o v e?

The idea of <u>being</u> is <u>neutral</u> from the point of view of the moral life. There is no need to have experience of the Good and the Beautiful in order to arrive at it. The experience solely of the mineral realm already suffices to arrive at the morally neutral idea of being. For the mineral <u>i s</u>. For this reason the idea of being is <u>objective</u>, i.e. it postulates, in the last analysis, the <u>thing</u> underlying everything, the permanent substance behind all phenomena.

I invite you, dear Unknown Friend, to close your eyes and to render an exact account of the image which accompanies this idea in your mental imagination. Do you not find the vague image of a substance without color or form, very similar to water in the sea?

Whatever your subjective representation of being as such, the <u>idea</u> of being is morally indifferent and is, consequently, essentially <u>naturalistic</u>. It implies something <u>passive</u> – a <u>given</u> or an unalterable <u>fact</u>. In contrast, when you think of love in the Johannine sense or of the Platonic idea of good, you find yourself facing an essential <u>activity</u>, which is in no way neutral from the point of view of moral life, but which is the heart itself. And the image which accompanies this notion of pure actuality would be that of fire or of the sun (PLATO compared the idea of Good to the Sun, and its light to truth), in place of the image of an indefinite fluid substance.

THALES and HERACLITUS have two different conceptions. The one sees in <u>w a t e r</u> the essence of things and the other sees it in <u>f i r e</u>. But here, primarily, it is so that the idea of G O O D and its summit – L O V E – is due to the conception of the world as a <u>m o r a l</u> process, whereas the idea of Being and its summit – the God <u>qui est</u> – is due to the conception of the world as that of a fact of Nature. The idea of Good (and of Love) is essentially <u>subjective</u>. It is absolutely necessary to have had experience of psychic and spiritual life in order to be able to conceive of it, whilst – as we have already indicated – the idea of being, being essentially <u>objective</u>, presupposes only a certain degree of outward experience... of the mineral realm, for example.

The consequence of choosing between these two – I will not say "points of view", but rather "attitudes of soul" lies above all in the intrinsic nature of the experience of practical mysticism which consequently derives from this choice. He who chooses Being

will aspire to true being and he who chooses Love will aspire to Love. For one only finds that for which one seeks. The seeker for true being will arrive at the experience of repose in being, and, as there cannot be two true beings ("the illegitimate twofoldness" of Saint-Martin) or two separate co-eternal substances but only one being and one substance, the center of "false being" will be suppressed ("false being" = Ahamkara, or the illusion of the separate existence of a separate substance of the "self"). The characteristic of this mystical way is that one loses the capacity to cry. An advanced pupil of Yoga or Vedanta will for ever have dry eyes, while the masters of the Cabbala, according to the Zohar, cry much and often. Christian mysticism speaks also of the "gift of tears" – as a precious gift of divine Grace. The Master cried in front of the tomb of Lazarus. Thus the outer characteristic of those who choose the other mystical way, that of the God of Love, is that they have the "gift of tears". This is in keeping with the very essence of their mystical experience. Their union with the Divine is not the absorption of their being by Divine Being, but rather the experience of the Breath of Divine Love, the Illumination by Divine Love, and the Warmth of Divine Love. The soul which receives this undergoes such a miraculous experience that it... cries. In this mystical experience fire meets with FIRE. Then nothing is extinguished in the human personality but, on the contrary, everything is set ablaze. This is the experience of "legitimate twofoldness" or the union of two separate substances in one sole essence. The substances remain separate as long as they are bereft of that which is the most precious in all existence: free alliance in Love.

I have spoken of "two substances" and "one essence". Here it is necessary to really grasp the significance of these two terms – substance (substantia) and essence (essentia), whose exact distinction is today almost effaced. However, at one time these two terms denoted two distinct categories not only of ideas but also of existence and consciousness itself.

PLATO established the distinction between einai (Εἶναι, being) and ousía (οὐσία, essence). "Being" signifies for him the fact of existence as such, whereas "essence" designates existence due to Ideas.

> "Everything which has existence has essence through its share in Ideas, which are themselves essences. The term essence will therefore not designate for us abstract existence but the reality of the Idea." (A.J.E. FOUILLÉE, "La philosophie de Platon", 4 vols., Paris, 1888-89, vol. ii, pp. 106-7)

Essence (essentia, ousia) signifies the positive act itself by means of which Being is (in the Cabbala one would speak of the act of emanation of the first Sephirah, K e t h e r – whose corresponding Divine name is A H I H (eyeh) "I am" – from A I N - S O P H, the Unlimited)

> "as if e s s e could generate the present participle active e s s e n s, whence e s s e n t i a would be derived." (Etienne GILSON, "The Spirit of Medieval

Philosophy"; trsl. A.H.C. Downes, London, 1950, p. 54)

Thus the term essentia properly belongs only to God alone, everything else enters into the category of substantiae. This is what the Church Father and Platonist, St. AUGUSTINE, says:-

"...manifestum est Deum abusive substantiam vocari, ut nomine usitatiore intellegitur essentia, quod vere ac proprie dicitur; ita ut fortasse solum Deum dici oporteat essentiam" – "...hence it is clear that God is not properly called a substance, and that he is better called by the more usual term essence, which term is a right and proper one; so much so indeed that perhaps God alone ought to be called essence." (St. Augustine, "De Trinitate" vii, 5,10)

The distinction between substance and essence, between Reality and the Ideal, between being and love (or the Idea of Good), or between He who is and Ain-Soph is also the key to the Gospel according to John:

"No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (John i, 18)

"No one has ever seen God", i.e. no one has ever contemplated God face to face while maintaining his personality. For "to see" signifies "to perceive while being in the face of that which one perceives". Before Jesus Christ there were, without doubt, numerous examples of the experience of God – being "seized by God" (experience of the Prophets), being "immersed in God" (experience of Yogis and Mystics in antiquity), or seeing the revelation of His work – the world (experience of Sages and Philosophers in antiquity); but no one ever saw God. For neither the inspiration of the Prophets, nor the immersion in God of the Mystics, nor the contemplation of God in the mirror of the creation by the Sages is equivalent to the new experience of the "vision" of God – the "beatific vision" of Christian theology. For this "vision" takes place in the domain of essence transcending all substance; it is not a fusion, but an encounter in the domain of essence, in which the human personality (the consciousness of self) remains not only intact and without impediment, but also becomes "that which it is", i.e. becomes truly itself – such as the Thought of God has conceived it for all eternity. The words of St. John, when thought of in this way, render intelligible those of the Master in the Gospel of St. John:-

"All who came before me are thieves and robbers" (John x, 8).

There is a profound mystery in these words. Indeed, how may they be understood alongside numerous other sayings of the Master referring to MOSES, DAVID and other prophets, who were all before him?

Now, it is a matter here not of theft and robbery, but of the principle of initiation before and after Jesus Christ. The masters prior to His Coming taught the experience of God at the expense of the personality, which had to be diminished when it was "seized" by God or "immersed" in God. In this sense – in the sense of the diminution or augmentation of the "talent of gold" entrusted to humanity, the

personality, which is the "image and likeness of God" (Goethe: "Das höchste Gut der Erdenkinder ist doch die Persönlichkeit" – "The highest treasure of the children of earth is surely the personality") – the masters prior to Christ were "thieves and robbers". They certainly bore testimony to God but the way which they taught and practiced was that of depersonalization, which made them witnesses ("martyrs") of God. The greatness of Bhagavan, the Buddha, was the high degree of depersonalization which he attained. The masters of Yoga are masters of depersonalization. The ancient philosophers – those who really lived as "philosophers" – practiced depersonalization. This is the case above all with the Stoics.

And this is why all those who have chosen the way of depersonalization are unable to cry and why they have dry eyes for ever. For it is the personality which cries and which alone is capable of the "gift of tears". "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!" (Matthew v, 4).

Therefore this is one aspect at least (there is also another profound one, but I do not know if it will be possible to write about it in one of the following Letters) according to which we may say that the mysterious words relating to "thieves and robbers" can become a source of radiant light. When the Gospel speaks of those who came before Jesus Christ, it is not only time which the word "before" designates, but also the grade of initiation – they are thieves and robbers with respect to the personality, since they taught the depersonalization of the human being. In contrast, the Master also says: "I have come that they (the sheep) may have life and have it abundantly" (John x, 10); in other words, the Master has come in order to render more living that which is dear to him and which is menaced with dangers, i.e. the s h e e p as the image of the personality! This appears inconceivable in the presence of the ideal of the personality according to NIETZSCHE and his "superman" or the great historical personalities such as Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon and... the "great personalities" of modern times!

No, dear Unknown Friend, possession by the will-to-power or the will-to-glory makes neither the personality nor its greatness. The "sheep" in the language of love of the Master signify neither the "great personality" nor the "little personality", but simply the individual soul which lives. He wants the soul to live without danger and to have as intensive a life as God has destined for it. The "sheep" is the living entity, surrounded by dangers, which is the object of divine care. Doesn't this suffice? Is there too little brilliance and glory here? Is this too feeble an image to be able to arrive at, for example, a magician evoking good and evil spirits?

Here it is a matter of drawing attention to one thing, to one sole thing: the language of the Master is that of love and not that of psychology, philosophy or science. The powerful magician, the artistic genius, the profound thinker and the radiant mystic certainly merit all these qualifications and perhaps still greater ones, but they do not dazzle God. In the eyes of God they are dear sheep to him; in consideration of them he desires

that they shall never go astray and that they shall have life increasingly and unceasingly.

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Before completing our reflections on the problem of the number two, the problem of legitimate twofoldness and illegitimate twofoldness, I should pay tribute to Saint-YVES d'ALVEYDRE, who set this problem in motion with his passionate intellectuality. In his work "Mission des Juifs" ("Mission of the Jews", Paris, 1956), he concentrated on the comparison of the complete divine name (YOD-HÉ-VAV-HÉ) with the incomplete name (HÉ-VAV-HÉ). In the first case, YOD, essence, is considered to be the supreme principle of Hierarchy; in the second case it is HÉ, substance, to which priority is attributed. It is in this way that Spiritualism and Naturalism originated – with all the consequences they entail in religious, philosophical, scientific and social spheres. The problem – as a formula – is therefore put with admirable exactness and precision, and it is this that I want to draw attention to. But I am at the same time obliged to say that exact and precise as it is, the material content that Saint-Yves gives to it leaves much to be desired. In particular he states that the principle of pure intellect is YOD, and to HÉ-VAV-HÉ as material content he attributes the principle of love and soul, or the "passionate principle". Thus, in attributing priority to the intellect as the masculine, spiritual principle, he subordinates love to it as the feminine, psychic principle. Now, the Master taught of the Father, who is Love. The intellect being the reflection – or light – of the fire principle of Love, can only be the feminine principle, Sophia or Wisdom, who assists the Creator in the work of creation, according to the Old Testament. The gnostic tradition also considers Sophia as the feminine principle. Pure intellect is that which reflects; love is that which acts.

The fact that man is usually more intellectual than woman does not signify that the intellect is a masculine principle. On the contrary, rather: man, being physically masculine, is feminine from the psychic point of view, while woman, being physically feminine, is masculine (active) in her soul. Now, the intellect is the feminine side of the soul, while the fertilizing imagination is the masculine principle. The intellect that is not fertilized by imagination guided by the heart is sterile. It depends on impulses which it receives from the participation of the heart by means of the imagination.

With regard to the third principle, the Spirit, it is neither intellect nor imagination, but Love-Wisdom. In principle it ought to be androgynous, but in practice it is not always so.

This, therefore, is all that it seems to me necessary to say on the subject of the problem of two and its significance – the resolution of this problem being the key to the second Arcanum, "The Papesse" ("The High Priestess"). For this is the arcanum of the twofoldness underlying consciousness – spontaneous activity and its reflection; it is the arcanum of the transformation of the pure act into representation, of representation into memory pictures, of memory pictures into the word, and of the word into written

characters or the book (paragraph).

"The Papesse" wears a three-layered tiara and holds an open book. The tiara is laden with precious stones, which suggests the idea that it is by way of three stages that the crystallization of the pure act descends through the three higher and invisible planes before arriving at the fourth stage – the book. For the problems that the symbol implies are: reflection, memory, word and writing; or, in other words – revelation and tradition, spoken and written or, to express it in a single word – GNOSIS (this is also the title given by ELIPHAS LÉVI as a heading for the second chapter of his "Dogme et rituel de la haute magie"; trsl. A.E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual", London, 1968, which deals with the second Arcanum).

It is concerned with Gnosis and not at all with Science, since Gnosis is exactly what the card of the Papesse expresses both in its entirety and in its details, namely the descent of revelation (the pure act or essence reflected by substance) down to the final stage – or "book". Science, on the contrary, begins with facts (the "characters" of the book of Nature) and ascends from facts to laws and from laws to principles. Gnosis is the reflection of that which is above; science, in contrast, is the interpretation of that which is below. The last stage of Gnosis is the world of facts, where it becomes fact itself, i.e. it becomes book; the first stage of Science is the world of facts which it "reads", in order to arrive at laws and principles.

As it is Gnosis (i.e. Mysticism become conscious of itself) that the card symbolizes, it does not present the image of a scientist or a doctor, but rather that of a High Priestess or "Papesse" – the sacred Guardian of the Book of Revelation. As "the Papesse" represents the stages of the descent of revelation, from the small uppermost circle on her tiara as far as the open book on her knees, her position is in keeping with this – she is seated. For, to be seated signifies a relationship between the vertical and horizontal which corresponds to the task of outward projection (horizontal) (book) of the descending revelation (vertical – tiara). This position indicates the practical method of Gnosis, just as the standing "Magician" indicates the practical method of Mysticism. The "Magician" dares – this is why he is standing. The "Papesse" knows – this is why she is seated. The transformation from to dare to to know consists in the change of position from that of the "Magician" to that of the "Papesse".

The essence of pure Mysticism is creative activity. One becomes a mystic when one dares to elevate oneself – i.e. "to stand upright", then even more upright, and ever more upright – beyond all created being as far as the Essence of Being, the divine creative Fire. "Concentration without effort" is burning without smoke or crackling fire. On the part of the human being it is the act of daring to aspire to the supreme Reality, and this act is real and effective only when the soul is serene and the body completely relaxed – without smoke and crackling fire.

The essence of pure Gnosis is reflected Mysticism. In Gnosis, that which takes

place in Mysticism becomes knowledge. That is, Gnosis is Mysticism which has become conscious of itself. It is mystical experience transformed into higher K n o w l e d g e.

Now, this transformation of mystical experience into knowledge takes place by degrees. The first is the pure reflection or a kind of imaginative repetition of the experience. The second degree is its entrance into memory. The third degree is its assimilation in thought and feeling, in a manner where it becomes a "message" or inner word. The fourth degree, lastly, is reached when it becomes a communicable symbol or "writing", or "book" – i.e. when it is formulated.

The pure reflection of mystical experience is without image and without word. It is purely movement. Here consciousness is moved by the immediate contact with that which transcends it, with the trans-subjective. This experience is as certain as the experience belonging to the sense of touch in the physical world and is, at the same time, as much devoid of form, color and sound as the sense of touch. For this reason one can compare it with the sense of touch and designate it as "spiritual touch" or "intuition".

This designation is not quite adequate, but at least it has the merit of expressing the character of immediate contact, which is peculiar to the first stage of reflection of the mystical act. Here, mystical experience and Gnosis are still inseparable and are as one.

If we want to establish the relationship between, on the one hand this state of consciousness and the three states which follow it, and on the other hand the sacred name Y O D – H É – V A V – H É (יהוה; abbreviated YHVH), which is the summation of Jewish Gnosis or the whole Cabbala, we cannot do otherwise than to attribute it to the first letter – YOD. The letter YOD is a point with the tendency of the indicated projection: י. This corresponds admirably to the experience of "spiritual touch", which also is nothing other than a point signifying germinally within itself a world of potentialities.

"Spiritual touch" (or "intuition") is that which permits contact between our consciousness and the world of pure mystical experience. It is by virtue of this that there exists in the world and in the history of mankind a real relationship between the living soul and the living God – which is true religion. The source and the root of all religion is Mysticism. Without it religion and the entire spiritual life of humanity would be only a code of laws regulating human thought and action. If God signifies for man something more than an abstract notion, it is thanks to "spiritual touch" or Mysticism. It is the seed of all religious life – with its theology, rituals and practices. Mysticism is also the seed of Gnosis, which is esoteric theology, just as Magic is esoteric art and Occultism or Hermeticism is esoteric philosophy. Now, Mysticism is the Y O D of the "Tetragrammaton", just as Gnosis is the first H É, Magic is the V A V – or "child" of Mysticism and Gnosis – and Hermetic Philosophy is the second (final) H É, i.e. the summation of what is revealed. The last H É or Hermetic philosophy is the "book" which the "Papesse" holds on her knees, while the three layers of her tiara represent the stages of the descent of revelation from the mystical plane to the gnostic plane,

then from the gnostic plane to the magical plane and, lastly, from the magical plane to the philosophical plane – to the plane of the "book" or the "doctrine".

Just as "spiritual touch" is the "mystical sense", so there is a "gnostic sense", a "magical sense" and a special "Hermetic-philosophical sense". Full consciousness of the sacred name Y H V H can only be attained by the united experience of these four senses and the practice of four different methods. For the fundamental thesis of Hermetic epistemology (or "gnoseology") is that "each object of knowledge demands a method of knowledge which is proper to it". This thesis or rule signifies that one ought never to apply the same method of knowledge on different planes, but only to different objects belonging to the same plane. A crying example of ignorance of this law is "cybernetic psychology", which wants to explain man and his psychic life by mechanical, material laws.

Each mode of experience and knowledge when pushed to its limit becomes a "sense" or engenders a special sense. He who dares to aspire to the experience of the unique essence of Being will develop the "mystical sense" or "spiritual touch". If he wants not only <u>to live</u> but also to learn to understand what he lives through, he will develop the "gnostic sense". And if he wants to put into practice what he has understood from mystical experience, he will develop the "magical sense". If, lastly, he wants all that he has experienced, understood and practiced to be not limited to himself and to his time, he must develop the "Hermetic-philosophical sense", and in practicing it – he will "write his book".

Such is the law that YOD-HÉ-VAV-HÉ expresses concerning the process of transformation of mystical experience into tradition; such is the law of the <u>birth</u> of tradition. Its source is mystical experience: one cannot be a gnostic or a magician or a Hermetic philosopher (or occultist) without being a mystic. The Tradition is a living one only when it constitutes a <u>complete organism</u>, when it is the result of the union of mysticism, gnosis, magic and Hermetic philosophy. If this is not so, it <u>decays and dies</u>. And the death of the Tradition manifests itself in the degeneration of its constituent elements, which become separated. Then, Hermetic philosophy separated from magic, gnosis and mysticism becomes a parasitic "system" of "autonomous" thought which is, truth to tell, a veritable psychopathological "complex", because it "bewitches" or enslaves human consciousness and deprives it of its liberty. A person who has had the misfortune to fall victim to the spell of a philosophical system (and the spells of sorcerers are mere trifles in comparison to the disastrous effect of the spell of a "philosophical system"!) can no longer see the world, or people, or historic events, as they are; he sees everything through the distorting prism of the "system" by which he is possessed. Thus, a <u>Marxist</u> of today is <u>incapable</u> of seeing anything else in the history of mankind other than the "class struggle". What I am saying concerning mysticism, gnosis, magic and philosophy would be considered by him only as a ruse on the part of the bourgeois class, with the aim of "screening with a mystical and idealistic haze" the reality of the exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie... although I have not inherited anything from my

parents and I have not experienced a single day without having to earn my living by means of work recognized as "legitimate" by Marxists!

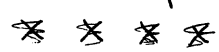
Another contemporary example of possession by a system is Freudianism. A man possessed by this system will see in everything I have written only the expression of "suppressed libido", which seeks and finds release in this manner. It would therefore be the lack of sexual fulfillment which has driven me to occupy myself with the Tarot and to write about it!!

Is there any need for further examples? Is it still necessary to cite the Hegelians with their distortion of the history of humanity, the Scholastic "realists" of the Middle Ages with the Inquisition, the rationalists of the XVIII th century who were blinded by the light of their own autonomous reasoning?

Yes, the "autonomous" philosophical systems separated from the living body of Tradition are parasitic structures, which seize the thought, feeling and finally the will of human beings. In fact, they play a role comparable to the psychopathological complexes of neurosis or other psychic maladies of obsession. Their physical analogy is cancer.

With respect to "autonomous" Magic, i.e. Magic without Mysticism and without Gnosis, it necessarily degenerates into sorcery or, at least, into a pathological, romantic aestheticism. There is no "Black Magic", but rather sorcerers groping in the dark. They grope in the dark because the light of Gnosis and Mysticism is lacking. A Gnosis without mystical experience is sterility itself. It is just a religious ghost, without life or movement. It is the corpse of religion animated intellectually by means of scraps fallen from the table of the past history of humanity. A "Universal Gnostic Church"! My God, what can one say, what should be said, when one has a knowledge, however limited, of the laws of spiritual life governing all tradition?!

Passing on to Mysticism which has not given birth to Gnosis, Magic and Hermetic Philosophy — such a mysticism must, sooner or later, necessarily degenerate into "spiritual enjoyment" or "intoxication". The mystic who wants only the experience of mystical states without understanding them, without drawing practical conclusions from them for life, and without wanting to be useful to others, who forgets everyone and everything in order to enjoy the mystical experience, can be compared to a spiritual drunkard.



So tradition can only live — as with all other living organisms — when it is a complete organism of mysticism, gnosis and effective magic, which manifests itself outwardly as Hermetic philosophy. This means to say simply that a tradition cannot live unless the <u>whole human being</u> lives through it, in it, and for it. For the whole human being is at one and the same time a mystic, a gnostic, a magician and a philosopher, i.e. he is religious, contemplative, artistic and intelligent. Everyone <u>believes</u> in something, <u>understands</u> something, <u>is capable of</u> something and <u>thinks</u> something. It is human nature which determines whether a tradition will live or die. And it is also human nature which is capable of giving birth to a complete Tradition and keeping it living. Because the four

"senses" – mystical, gnostic, magical and philosophical – exist, be it in potentiality or in actuality, in each human being.

Now, the practical teaching of the second Arcanum, "the Papesse", relates to the development of the "gnostic sense".

What is the "gnostic sense"? –

It is the contemplative sense: A contemplation – which is preceded by a concentrated meditation – commences the very moment that discursive and logical thought is suspended. Discursive thought is satisfied the when it arrives at a well-founded conclusion. Now, this conclusion is the point of departure for contemplation. It fathoms the profundity of this conclusion at which discursive thought arrives. Contemplation discovers a world within that which discursive thought simply verifies as "true". The gnostic sense begins to operate when it is a matter of a new dimension in the act of knowledge, namely that of depth. It becomes active when it is a question of something deeper than the question: Is it true or false? It perceives more the significance of the truth discovered by discursive thought and also "why this truth is true in itself", i.e. it reaches to the mystical or essential source of this truth. How does it arrive at this? By listening in silence. It is as if one wanted to recall something forgotten. Consciousness "listens" in silence, as one "listens" inwardly in order to call to mind from the night of forgetfulness something that one formerly knew. But there is an essential difference between the "listening silence" of contemplation and the silence arising from the effort to recall. In this second situation, it is the horizontal – in time, past and present – which comes into play, while the "listening silence" of contemplation relates to the vertical – to that which is above and that which is below. In the act of recall, one establishes in oneself an inner mirror in order to reflect the past; when one "listens in silence" in the state of contemplation, one also makes consciousness into a mirror, but this mirror has the task of reflecting that which is above. It is the act of recall in the vertical.

There are, in fact, two types of memory: "horizontal memory", which renders the past present, and "vertical memory", which renders that which is above as present below, or – according to our distinction between the two categories of symbolism which were defined in the first Letter – the "mythological memory" and the "typological memory".

HENRI BERGSON is perfectly right when he writes of horizontal or mythological memory: –

> "The truth is that memory does not consist in a regression from the present to the past, but on the contrary in a progress from the past to the present." (Henri Bergson, "Matter and Memory"; trsl. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer, London, 1911, p. 319)
>
> – and also: – "... pure memory is a spiritual manifestation. With memory we are in very truth in the domain of the spirit." (ibid., p. 320)

It is therefore the past which comes to us in the remembrance and this is why the act of recollection is preceded by a state of empty silence which plays the role of a mirror,

where the past can be reflected or, according to Bergson, where "the state of the brain continues the remembrance; it gives it a hold on the present by the materiality which it (acting as a "mirror") confers upon it." (ibid., p.320).

It is the same again for typological or "vertical memory". PLATO is also perfectly right when he says of the memory of the transcendent Self which can confer reminiscence upon the empirical self :-

> "Seeing that the soul is immortal and has been born many times, and has beheld all things both in this world and in the nether realms, she has acquired knowledge of all and everything... (thus) it would seem, research and learning are wholly recollection." (Plato, "Menon" 81, c,d; trsl. W.R.M.Lamb, London, 1924, p. 303)

Here, likewise, that which is above, in the domain of the transcendent Self, descends to the plane of the empirical self, when there is created in oneself the empty silence which serves to mirror the revelation from above.

What is necessary, therefore, in order to obtain here in the realm of the state of waking consciousness the reflection of that which is above in the mystical domain?

It is necessary "to be seated", i.e. to establish an active-passive state of consciousness, or state of soul which listens attentively in silence. It is necessary to be "woman", i.e. to be in the state of silent expectation, and not in that of the activity which "talks". It is necessary "to cover with a veil" the intermediate planes between the plane whose reflection is expected and the plane of the state of waking consciousness where the reflection becomes actualized. It is necessary "to cover the head with a three-layered tiara", i.e. to apply oneself to a problem or question of such gravity that it bears upon the three worlds and on that which is above. Lastly, it is necessary "to have one's eyes turned towards the open book on the knees", i.e. to carry out a complete psychurgical operation in the aim of objectifying one's result, in the aim of "continuing the book of the Tradition", adding something to it.

Now, all these practical rules of Gnosis are found clearly indicated in the Card, "the Papesse". Here is a woman; she is seated; she wears a three-layered tiara; a veil is suspended above her to cover the intermediate planes that she does not want to perceive; and she is looking at an open book on her knees.

The "gnostic sense" is therefore "spiritual hearing", just as the "mystical sense" is "spiritual touch". This does not mean to say that the "gnostic sense" perceives sounds, but only that its perceptions are due to a consciousness analogous to that in the attitude of expectation and attention when one listens, and that the contact between the perceiver and the perceived is not so immediate as in "spiritual touch" or mystical experience.

It still remains to characterize the two other "senses" mentioned above, namely the "magical sense" and the "Hermetic-philosophical sense".

The "magical sense" is that of projection, while the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" is that of "synthesis". By "projection" is meant to put outwards, followed by detaching from oneself, the contents of the inner life – an operation similar to that which is

produced on the psychic plane in artistic creation and on the physical plane in giving birth.

The talent of the artist consists in this: that he can render objective – or project – his ideas and feelings so as to obtain a more profound effect on others than that of the expression of ideas and feelings by a person who is not an artist. A work of art is endowed with a life of its own. When a woman gives birth to a child, she gives birth to a being endowed with a life of its own, which detaches itself from her organism in order to start an independent existence. The "magical sense" also consists in the faculty of projecting outwards the contents of the inner life, which remain endowed with a life of their own. Magic, Art, and Giving Birth are essentially analogous and pertain to the same category of "projection" or exteriorization of the inner life. The Church dogma of the creation of the world "ex nihilo", i.e. the projection from "nothingness" of forms and matter which are conferred with a life of their own, signifies the divine and cosmic crowning of this series of analogies. The doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" is the apotheosis of magic. Its essential statement is, in fact, that the world is a magical act.

In contrast, pantheistic, emanationist and demiurgic doctrines deprive creation of its magical sense. Pantheism denies the independent existence of creatures; they live only as parts of the divine life and the world is only the body of God. Emanationism attributes only a transitory, and therefore ephemeral, existence to creatures and the world. Demiurgism declares that "ex nihilo nihil" ("out of nothing comes nothing") and teaches that there must exist a <u>substance</u> co-eternal with God, which God uses as <u>material</u> for his work of craftmanship. God is therefore not the Creator or magical Author of the world, but only its craftsman – He only forms, i.e. regroups and recombines, the material elements which are given to Him.

Here it is not a matter of considering the doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" as the <u>only</u> explanation of the world that we find around us, within us and above us. Because the world is vast and great, there is room and there are levels of existence for <u>all</u> modes of constructive activity which, taken all together, explain the world of our experience such as it is? What is it a question of here? It is to affirm with as much clarity as possible the thesis that the doctrine of creation "ex nihilo" is the highest possible expression of M a g i c, namely divine and cosmic Magic.

But if you ask me, dear Unknown Friend, if I believe that the creation of the world is only a magical act, without something preceding and without something following it, I reply to you: no, I do not believe this. A <u>mystical</u> act and a <u>gnostic</u> act "precede" in eternity the act of creation as a <u>magical</u> act; this is followed by the activity of formation by the demiurge, or the demiurgic hierarchies, who undertake the work of craftmanship – work which is essentially that of executive or <u>Hermetic-philosophical</u> intelligence.

The classical Cabbala furnishes us with a marvellous example of the <u>peace</u> possible between apparently rival doctrines.

In its doctrine of ten Sephiroth, it teaches first the Mystery of Eternal <u>Mysticism</u> – A I N - S O P H, the Unlimited. Then it expounds the <u>gnostic</u> doctrine of

eternal emanations from the womb of the Divine which precede – in ordine cognoscendi – the act of creation. They are the Ideas of God within God, which precede the creation – the latter being a conscious act and not impulsive or instinctive. Then it speaks of pure creation or creation "ex nihilo" – the act of the magical projection of the Ideas of the Plan of Creation, i.e. the Sephiroth. This creative, magical act is followed – in ordine cognoscendi, always – by the activity of <u>formation</u> in which the beings of the spiritual hierarchies participate, including man.

It is in this way that, according to the Cabbala, the world comes into being, that the world of facts or deeds known to us through experience becomes what it is.

Now, "'olam ha'assiah", the world of facts, is preceded by "'olam ha yetzirah", the world of formation or the demiurgic world; this is the product of "'olam ha beriah", the world of creation or the magical world which is, in turn, the realization of "'olam ha atziluth", the world of emanations or the gnostic world, inseparate and inseparable from God, who in his true essence is the mystery of supreme mysticism -- A I N - S O P H, the Unlimited.

It is therefore possible – and for us there is no doubt about it – to reconcile the diverse doctrines concerning the creation; it is only necessary to put each of them in its proper place, or to apply each to the plane which is proper to it. The Cabbala, through its doctrine of the Sephiroth, provides a wonderful proof that this is so.

Pantheism is true for the "world of emanations" ('olam ha atziluth), where there are only Ideas – within God and inseparable from Him; but Theism is true when one leaves the domain of uncreated eternity to pass on to the creation, meaning the creation of the "ancestors" or "archetypes" of phenomena that we know through our experience. And Demiurgism is true when we contemplate the world or plane of formation, or the evolution of beings with the aim of coming into conformity with their created prototypes.

But leaving aside the worlds or planes of formation, creation, emanation and divine-mystical essence, one can confine oneself solely to the plane of facts. Then Naturalism becomes true – within the limits of this plane, taken in isolation.

The establishing of the hierarchic order of these doctrines concerning the creation, which appear to be rival, has led us right into the domain of activity of the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" or the "sense of synthesis". This sense, corresponding to the second HÉ of the divine name YHVH, is essentially that of final summary or the vision of the <u>whole</u>. It differs from the "gnostic sense" – which corresponds to the first HÉ of the divine name – in that it summarizes or gives the synthesis of the <u>differentiated whole</u>, while the "gnostic sense" gives the reflection of the <u>whole in its germinal state</u>. The "gnostic sense" produces the <u>first synthesis</u> or the synthesis before analysis. The "Hermetic-philosophical sense", in contrast, produces the <u>second synthesis</u> or the synthesis after analysis. The work which is accomplished by means of this sense is not entirely creative. Rather, it is "demiurgic", a work of craftmanship, where one carries out the forming of a given material with the aim of giving it the form of its final

manifestation.

Since one finds in the Emerald Table formulas summarizing "the three parts of the Philosophy of the whole world" ("tres partes Philosophiae totius mundi"), and since these at the same time summarize the worlds of magical experience, gnostic revelation and mystical experience, we have given this sense the name "Hermetic-philosophical" sense, i.e. the sense of synthesis of the three worlds or higher planes in a fourth world or plane. It is the sense of synthesis operating in the vertical of the superimposed planes, i.e. it is "Hermetic". For Hermeticism is essentially the philosophy, based on Magic, Gnosis and Mysticism, which aspires to the synthesis of the diverse planes of the Macrocosm and Microcosm. When one summarizes facts on a single plane – for example those of biology – one uses the "scientific sense" and not the "Hermetic-philosophical sense". The scientific sense – which is generally known and recognized – summarizes the facts of experience on a single plane, in the horizontal. Hermeticism is not a science and will never be one. It can certainly make use of the sciences and their results, but by doing so it does not become a science.

Non-Hermetic contemporary philosophy summarizes particular sciences with the aim of fulfilling the function of a "science of sciences" – and has this in common with Hermeticism. But, in itself, it differs from Hermeticism, which aspires to summarize experience in all planes, which varies according to the plane where the experience takes place.

This is why we have chosen the term "Hermetic-philosophical" to designate the fourth sense, the "sense of synthesis".

It goes without saying that the characterization of the four senses – whose collaboration is necessary for a Tradition to live and not to degenerate – is sketched here in a very incomplete manner. But the two following Arcana:- "the Empress" and "the Emperor" – are of a nature such as to give greater depth and more concrete content to what we are setting forth, especially concerning the "magical sense" and the "Hermetic-philosophical" sense. For the third Arcanum of the TAROT, "the Empress", is the Arcanum of Magic and the fourth Arcanum, "the Emperor", is that of Hermetic Philosophy.

LETTER III

Meditation on the third Arcanum of the Tarot -- "The Empress" - "L'Impératrice"

Ecce ancilla Domini
Mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum
(Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word.)
(Luke i, 38)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The third Arcanum, "The Empress", is that of sacred Magic.

Now, there are three kinds of magic:

Magic where the magician is the instrument of divine power– this is sacred Magic.

Magic where the magician himself is the source of the magical operation – this is personal magic.

Magic, lastly, where the magician is the instrument of elemental forces or other unconscious forces – this is sorcery.

The teaching of the third Arcanum – in view of the context of the Card and its place between the second and fourth Arcana – refers to divine or Sacred Magic.

All magic, including sorcery, is the putting into practice of this: that the subtle rules the dense – force, matter; consciousness, force; and the superconscious or divine, consciousness. It is this latter rulership that "The Empress" symbolizes. Her crown, scepter and shield (coat-of-arms) are the three instruments of the exercise of this power. The crowned head indicates the power of the Divine over consciousness; the right arm (according to the viewer of the Card), which bears a scepter topped by a cross mounted on a globe of gold, represents the power of consciousness over force; and the left arm, which carries a shield bearing an eagle, signifies the power of energy over matter or the volatile over the gross. The crown is the divine authorization of magic. It is only magic crowned from above which is not usurpatory. The crown is that which renders it legitimate.

The sceptre is magical power. It is by virtue of the sceptre that she is not impotent.

The shield bearing the eagle shows the aim of magical power; it is its emblem and its motto, which reads:- "Liberation in order to ascend".

And the steady throne on which "The Empress" is seated symbolizes the indisputable and inalienable place which belongs to magic in spiritual, psychic and natural life – thanks to divine authorization or the crown, to the reality of her power or the scepter, and to that which she has as her objective or the shield. This is the role of magic in the world.

Let us now consider in a more thorough way the crown, the scepter, the shield or coat-of-arms and the throne of the Empress, understood as the divine legitimacy, the

power, the objective and the role of m a g i c.

The crown of "The Empress" differs primarily from the tiara of "The High Priestess" of Arcanum 2 in that it has <u>two</u> levels instead of three. The dignity or function that it signifies or confers therefore has bearing upon two planes. Gnosis has a tiara because she has the task of carrying revelation through three planes as far as the "book" or tradition. Magic is crowned, since her task is the sublimation of Nature, as indicated by the shield or coat-of-arms with the eagle in flight, that "The Empress" holds instead of the book of "The High Priestess".

Joséphin PÉLADAN defined magic as "the art of sublimation of man"; no other formula is superior to his (cf. "Comment on devient mage", Paris, 1892, p.135). This is exactly the emblem – or aim – of magic, if one understands by "sublimation of man" that of human <u>nature</u>. Péladan had a very profound understanding of the emblem of magic: the shield with the eagle in flight. All his works bear witness to this. Together they represent a magnificent flight; they aim, as a whole and each taken individually, at the ideal of the sublimation of human nature. It is because PÉLADAN bore the emblem of magic: the flying eagle, that this is so. Isn't it to have the emblem of magic before one's eyes that one is invited "to throw the eagles of one's desires to the wind", because happiness "raised to the level of an ideal, freed from the negative aspect of oneself and of things ... is the sole triumph of this world" -?- ("Traité des antinomies", Paris, 1901, p.112). – It is this same emblem – the shield with the eagle – that PAPUS had in mind, in actual fact, when he defined magic :-

> "Magic is: <u>the application of the strengthed human will to accelerate the evolution of the living forces of Nature</u>" (Papus, "Traité méthodique de magie pratique", Paris, 3rd edition, p.10) -- and he preceded this definition by another: "-... <u>Magic</u> is the <u>science</u> of <u>love</u>." (ibid., p.2).

For it is precisely "the accelerated evolution of the living forces of Nature" that the eagle of the <u>shield</u> of "The Empress" represents; "the science of LOVE" is the <u>scepter</u> of "The Empress", which represents the <u>means</u> by which the aim of magic is attained.

Now, if the shield signifies the "<u>what</u>?" and the scepter the "<u>how</u>?" of magic, the crown represents here the "by <u>what right</u>?".

Although magic has disappeared from the criminal codes of our time, the question of its legitimacy still persists as a moral, theological and also medical question. One asks oneself today, just as in the past, if it is morally legitimate to aspire, without talking of exercizing, to an exceptional power conferring us with dominion over our fellow beings; one asks oneself if such an aspiration is due, in the last analysis, to vaingloriousness, and if it is compatible with the role that all sincere and believing Christians reserve for divine grace, be it immediate or be it acting through the intermediary of guardian angels and the saints of God? One asks oneself, lastly, if such an aspiration is not unwholesome and contrary to human nature, religion and metaphysics, given the limits to which one can go with impunity

towards the Invisible.

All these doubts and objections are well-founded. It is therefore a matter not of refuting them, but of knowing whether there exists a magic which is free from these doubts and objections or, in other words, whether there exists a legitimate magic from a moral, religious and medical point of view.

As a point of departure, we shall take these words from the New Testament:

> "Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints that lived at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him: "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed!" And immediately he rose." (Acts ix, 32-34)

Here is a spiritual act of healing whose legitimacy is beyond doubt: from a moral point of view, it is an act of pure charity; from a religious point of view, it is in the name of Jesus Christ and not the name of Peter himself that the healing is effected; from a medical point of view it is a perfect cure, without prejudice to physical or psychic health, that is denoted for the healer. That which establishes the indisputable legitimacy of the healing of Aeneas is, firstly, the aim of Peter's deed: to restore movement to the person who had been unable to move; secondly, it is the means by which the healing was accomplished: the word based on the essence of Jesus Christ; thirdly, it is the source of the deed: "Jesus Christ heals you!"

These are the three elements of sacred magic which render it legitimate and in which it is easy to recognize the three insignias of "The Empress" – the crown, the scepter and the emblem. For to give movement to the motionless is the liberating action represented by the eagle on the shield; to realize the healing solely through the spoken word is to put into play the scepter surmounted by the cross; to accomplish it in the name of Jesus Christ is to have the head crowned by the divine.

But, one could object, the healing of Aeneas has nothing to do with magic. It is a miracle, i.e. the action of God, and man is nothing here.

Was the apostle Peter there, therefore, for nothing? If this were true, why does he go up to Aeneas? Why is the divine action of healing not accomplished directly, without Peter as intermediary?

No, Peter was there for something. His presence and his voice were necessary in order that the healing could take place. Why?

This problem merits deep meditation, for it encloses the central mystery of the Christian religion, that of the Incarnation.

Indeed, why must the Logos, the Son of the Father, incarnate and become God-Man in order to accomplish the supreme work of Divine Magic – the Work of the Redemption?

In order to humble himself!? But, being God, he was humility itself. In order to participate in human destiny: human birth, life and death? But God who is love

participated, participates, and will always participate in human destiny -- He freezes with all those who are cold, He suffers with those who are suffering and He undergoes agony with all those who die. -- You know that in monasteries in the Near East, at a time when hearts were still beating on the foundation of the Divine Presence, the pronouncing of these words was taught as a miraculous cure for all afflictions and every suffering:- "Glory to your long-suffering, Lord!"

No, the work of the Redemption, being that of love, requires the perfect union in love of <u>two wills</u>, distinct and free, - divine will and human will. The mystery of the God-Man is the key of divine Magic, being the fundamental condition of the work of the Redemption, which is an operation of divine Magic comparable only to that of the creation of the world.

Thus miracles require <u>t w o</u> united wills! They are not manifestations of an all-powerful will <u>ordaining</u>, but are due to a new power which is <u>born</u> whenever there is unity between divine will and human will. Peter was therefore certainly there for something at the healing of Aeneas at Lydda. The divine will needed his will in order to give birth to the power which raised the paralyzed Aeneas from his bed. Such an action, where there is simultaneously an accordance of divine will and human will, is exactly what we mean by "sacred magic" or "divine magic".

Should one speak of "magic" when it is a case of a miracle? Yes, because there is a <u>magus</u> and the participation of his will is essential for the realization of the miracle. Peter goes up to Aeneas and it is he who utters the words which effect the healing. The participation of Peter is indisputable, for he was there as a <u>human magus</u>. Consequently, the use of the word "<u>m a g i c</u>" is quite justified, at least if one understands by "magic" the power of the invisible and spiritual over the visible and material.

But this was not "personal magic"; rather it was "divine magic" to which the healing of Aeneas was due. For Peter could do nothing if his will was not united with the divine will. He was fully conscious of this, and this is why he says to Aeneas: "Jesus Christ heals you". This means to say: "Jesus Christ really wants to heal you. Jesus Christ has sent me to you in order that I might do what he has said to me. As far as I am concerned, I am doubly happy to be able at one and the same time to serve my Master and to heal you, my dear brother Aeneas".

Here lies the meaning of the <u>two</u>-layered <u>crown</u> which the Empress wears.

It is to be able to be "doubly happy" to serve that which is above and that which is below. For the crown, just as the tiara, represents the power of <u>service</u>. It is service rendered to that which is above and service rendered to that which is below which constitutes the legitimacy of sacred Magic.

The magus in sacred Magic plays the role of the <u>last link</u> in the magical chain which descends from above, i.e. in order to serve as the terrestrial <u>point of contact</u> and <u>point of concentration</u> for the Operation conceived, willed and put into action from above. In fact, when one is this last link, one wears the <u>crown</u> of legitimate magic. And, let us say

it again, all magic that is not crowned in this way is therefore illegitimate.

Is the legitimate exercise of sacred Magic therefore reserved for the Priesthood alone?-

To this, I reply with another question: Is the love of God and of one's neighbor reserved for the Priesthood alone? Sacred Magic is the power of love, born of the union in love of divine will and human will. Now, Monsieur PHILIP of LYONS was neither priest nor doctor, but he healed sick people through a spiritual power which he said was not his but "from the Friend above".

The Priesthood includes numerous thaumaturgists – St. GREGORY, St. NICHOLAS and St. PATRICK – which is sufficient to convince us that sacred Magic is truly amongst the works of the Priesthood. How could it be otherwise, given that the administration of the Sacraments – these <u>universal</u> operations of sacred Magic – constitute the principal responsibility of the clergy and that the individual operations "decided above" are entrusted above all to those living in the atmosphere of the universal Sacraments? Is it not natural that he who participates each day in the mystery of the Transubstantiation is called, in the first place, to Sacred Magic?

The life and work of the holy priest of ARS shows us the loftiness and splendor of individual sacred Magic – <u>beyond</u> the universal sacraments – which is <u>able</u> to manifest itself in the life and work of a simple country parson!

But on the other hand, the life and work of Monsieur PHILIP of LYONS shows us the loftiness and splendor of individual sacred magic – <u>without</u> the universal sacraments – which is <u>able</u> to manifest itself in the life and work of a layman, born and raised in the country!

Love is active wherever it exists. It is everyone's vocation; it is no one's prerogative.

Thus it is clear from the preceding that gnosis due to mystical experience must precede sacred magic. This is the meaning of the crown that "the Empress" wears. Sacred magic is the child of mysticism and gnosis.

If it were not so, magic would be the putting into practice of <u>occult theory</u>. This applies only to personal or usurpatory magic. Sacred or divine Magic is the putting into practice of <u>mystical revelation</u>. The Master revealed to Peter what he had to do – inwardly and outwardly – in order to heal Aeneas at Lydda. It is here that the order of things in sacred Magic is given: firstly, <u>real</u> contact with the divine (mysticism), then the taking into <u>consciousness</u> of this contact (gnosis), and lastly the <u>putting into operation</u> or the execution of that which mystical revelation has made known as being the task to accomplish and the method to follow.

Personal or usurpatory magic follows, in contrast, the reverse order. Here it is the magician himself who studies occult theory and decides when and how to put it into practice. If he does so following the advice given by a master in magic, someone who has experimented in magic more than he has, the principle remains the same: it is always the human personality who decides the "what" and the "how". Thus PAPUS says in his

"Traité méthodique de magie pratique":-

> "What differentiates magic from occult science in general is that the first is a practical science, while the second is above all theoretical. But to want to do magic without knowing occultism is to want to drive a locomotive without having passed through a special theoretical school. One can envisage the result." (p.4) and then: "... Magic being a practical science demands preliminary theoretical knowledge, as with all practical sciences." (p.5)

And lastly:- ..." Magic, considered as a science of application, limits its action almost solely to the development of relationships existing between man and Nature. The study of the relations existing between man and the higher plane, the divine plane, in all its variations, relates more to theurgy than to magic." (p.142) (Paris, 3rd edition, pp.4-5,142)

Here is an entirely characteristic definition, which leaves nothing more to desire, of what we have designated as "arbitrary" or "personal magic". Magic of this sort does not include that which is higher than man: the divine plane. Here man is the sole master – as he is elsewhere in all the practical sciences.

> "As a general rule, the principal director in every operation is the human Will; the means of action, the implement used, is the astral or natural fluid, and the end to achieve is the realization (generally on the physical plane) of the undertaken operation." (PAPUS, "La science des mages", Paris, 1974, p.69)

but..." regarding ceremonial magic and naturalism, we can only condemn them as much as for their uselessness as for the formidable dangers that they contain and for the state of soul which they suppose.... In fact, one understands here, under this last designation (ceremonial magic), an operation where the human Will and intelligence ALONE are active, without divine concurrence." (PAPUS," Traité élémentaire de science occulte", Paris, 1888, pp.430-431)

"The formidable dangers" of arbitrary or personal magic have been described by all those who have had direct or indirect experience of this. Henry Cornelius AGRIPPA ("De Occulta Philosophia", vol. iii), Eliphas LÉVI ("Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual") and PAPUS have said sufficient to prove that arbitrary or personal magic is most dangerous.

For sacred or divine Magic, one risks only that it is inoperative, because of an error – which can be distressing – but it comprises no danger.

Before finishing here with the dangers of corrupt magic, I would like to add what is elaborated by Jean HERBERT in his preface to the French edition of Arthur AVALON's "Serpent Power", where he puts the reader on guard against the temptation of trying to practice the tantric method and evoking the "serpent power" or "kundalini", raising it up to the head, to the Sahasrara (crown) center:.." He who attempts this without being guided by an authentic master – which is almost certainly

impossible in the Occident - will find himself in a situation quite analogous to that of a child whom one allows to play with all the drugs filling a pharmacy, or to walk with a lighted taper into a fireworks factory. Incurable heart problems, slow destruction of the spinal marrow, sexual disorders and madness await those who risk this." (Arthur Avalon, "La puissance du serpent"; trsl. J. Herbert, Lyons, 1959, Intro.)

Here is the bouquet of the "flowers of misfortune" which is offered to the beginner without a guru, or with a non-authentic guru!

Let us return to sacred Magic. Having characterized its "crown" or divine legitimacy, we should now consider its "scepter" or power.

The scepter of "The Empress" comprises three parts: a cross, a globe and a staff topped by a little bowl or bulb. The staff is narrower below, beneath where "The Empress" holds it, than above, where it supports the globe surmounted by a cross. The globe is divided into two by a belt or "equatorial zone". Thus it can be said that it is formed from <u>two cups</u>, one upside down, supporting the cross and turned downwards or or "below", the other turned upwards and supported by the staff, is open towards the "above". Now, the joining together of the cup surmounted by a cross and of another supported by a staff

- which constitutes the scepter of the Empress - is the symbolic expression of the method of the <u>realization</u> of the potentiality represented by the crown. <u>It is the union of two potential wills in the crown, become actual in the scepter</u>. The cup surmounted by the cross and turned downwards or "below" is the divine will, while the cup supported by the staff and turned upwards or "above" is the human will. Their active union is the scepter or the power of sacred Magic. This power results from the influx from the cross which flows from the upper cup into the empty lower cup and from there descends through the staff in order to be concentrated at its extremity as an "acorn" or a <u>drop</u>. Or to express it in other words: the Holy Blood from above concentrates itself and becomes a "drop" of human blood by the human word and action.

Perhaps you will say: but this is the Holy GRAIL, it is the mystical Eucharist of which you speak!

Yes, this is exactly to do with the Holy Grail or the mystical Eucharist. For it is there, and only there, that the power of sacred Magic resides. This power is, in the last analysis, that of twofold <u>sincerity</u> - divine and human - united in the human word or action. Because not one word or action is <u>truly</u> sincere when it is only cerebral, and when it is only cerebral then it is not a flow of vital blood. The more sincerity there is in the human word or action, the more there is the vital essence of blood. When it happens - and the Angels fall down in adoration when this occurs - that the human wish is in accord with the divine wish, the Holy Blood is then united to the vital essence of the human blood and the <u>Mystery of the God-Man is repeated</u>, and also the miraculous power of

the God-Man is reiterated. Here is the power of sacred Magic - or its scepter.

Dear Unknown Friend, do not think that I have only combined these things intellectually, after having read books on the Holy Grail and treatises of mystical theology on the sacrament of the Eucharist. No, I would never write of the mystery of Blood as the source of sacred Magic -- - even if I "knew" these things - if I had not visited and returned many times to the Chapel of Holy Blood at Bruges. There I have had the unsettling experience of the reality of the Holy Blood of the God-Man. It is this experience, with the effect of rejuvenating the soul - what am I saying!? - not only rejuvenating the soul, but even elevating it in the sense of the healing of Aeneas effected by St. Peter: "Rise, and make your bed!" - it is this experience, I say, which has revealed to me the mystery of the Holy Blood and the source of the power of sacred Magic. Do not let the personal character of what I am writing obscure this for you. I am an anonymous author and I remain so in order to be able to be more frank and sincere than is ordinarily permitted to an author.

The aim of sacred Magic, as we have said, is represented by the shield that "The Empress" holds in place of the book which "The High Priestess" holds. Sacred Gnosis has as its aim the communicable expression (or "book") of mystical revelation, while the aim of sacred Magic is liberating action, i.e. the restoration of freedom to beings who who have partially or totally lost it. The eagle in flight depicted on the shield signifies this emblem of sacred Magic, which could thus be formulated: "Give freedom to he who is enslaved". And this includes all the works mentioned by LUKE (vii, 21-22):- "Jesus cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many that were blind he bestowed sight. And he answered them: Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them."

This is the aim of sacred Magic; it is nothing other than to give the freedom to see, to hear, to walk, to live, to follow an ideal and to be truly oneself - i.e. to give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, the ability to walk to the lame, life to the dead, good news or ideals to the poor and free will to those who are possessed by evil spirits. It never encroaches upon freedom, the restoration of which is its unique aim.

It is more than pure and simple healing which is the object of sacred Magic; it is the restoration of freedom, including here freeing from the imprisonment of doubt, fear, hate, apathy and despair. The "evil spirits" which deprive man of his freedom are not at all beings of the so-called "hierarchies of evil" or "fallen hierarchies". Neither Satan, nor Belial, nor Lucifer, nor Mephistopheles have ever deprived anyone of his freedom. Temptation is their only weapon and this presupposes the freedom of he who is tempted. But possession by an "evil spirit" has nothing to do with temptation. It is invariably the same thing as with Frankenstein's monster. One engenders an elemental being and one subsequently becomes the slave of one's own creation. The "demons" or "evil spirits" of the New Testament are called today in psychotherapy

"neuroses of obsession", "neuroses of fear", "fixed ideas", etc. They have been discovered by contemporary psychiatrists and are recognized as <u>real</u> – i.e. as "parasitic psychic organisms" independent of the conscious human will and tending to subjugate it. But the Devil is not there to no avail – although not in the sense of direct participation. He observes the <u>law</u> – which protects human freedom and is the inviolable Convention between the hierarchies of the "right" and those of the "left" – and never violates it, as stands out in the example of the story of JOB. One need not fear the Devil, but rather the perverse tendencies in oneself! For these perverse human tendencies can deprive us of our freedom and enslave us. Worse still, they can avail themselves of our imagination and inventive faculties and lead us to creations which can become the scourge of mankind. The atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb are flagrant examples of this.

Man with the possible perversity of his warped imagination is far more dangerous than the Devil and his legions. For man is not bound by the Convention concluded between Heaven and Hell; he can go beyond the limits of the law and engender <u>arbitrarily</u> malicious forces whose nature and action are <u>beyond</u> the framework of the Law ... such being the Molochs and other "gods" of Canaa, Phoenecia, Carthage, ancient Mexico and other lands, which exacted human sacrifice. One has to guard against accusing the beings of the hierarchies of evil to their detriment of having played the role of Molochs, these being only creatures of the perverse collective human will and imagination. These are egregores, engendered by collective perversity, just as there exist the "demons" or "evil spirits" engendered by individuals. – But we have said enough about demons; the problem of "evil spirits" will be treated in a more detailed and profound way in the 15th Letter, dedicated to Arcanum XV.

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The <u>throne</u> on which "The Empress" is seated represents, as we have said, the role of sacred Magic in the world. It is its place in the world and in the history of the world; it is, lastly, its basis. In other words, it is that which attends it, desires it and is always ready to receive it. What is this?

In view of the liberating function of sacred Magic, it is all that which is deprived of liberty and is bound by necessity. Concerning this, St. Paul said:

> "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." (Romans viii, 19-23)

It is therefore the mineral, plant, animal and human realms of Nature – in a word, Nature in its entirety – which constitute the domain of sacred Magic. The reason for the

existence of sacred Magic stems from the Fall and the whole domain of the Fall – comprising fallen Nature, fallen man and the fallen hierarchies. These are the beings belonging to it who hope "with eager longing" to be "set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God".

How does sacred Magic operate towards this end? How, for example, does it deliver man?

The throne of "The Empress" has a back. It strongly resembles two wings, so that certain interpreters of the Tarot have seen "The Empress" as being winged. Others, however, see only a back. In view of the context of the Card, the meaning of the coat-of-arms bearing the eagle, the scepter surmounted by the cross, and the two-layered crown, could one not see the back here in the form of two <u>petrified and immobilized</u> wings, but which had once been genuine wings and which are again potentially so?

If this interpretation is accepted, not only would it reconcile the two apparently opposing points of view but also it would agree with all that the Card teaches about the sphere, the aim, the power and the legitimacy of sacred Magic: to give movement to the petrified wings; would this not be in accord with the liberating mission of sacred Magic and with the words of St. Paul?

Whatever it may be, this interpretation comprises the answer to the question as to the concrete mode of the liberating action of sacred Magic. It is in every way contrary to the action of constraint of false or personal magic. It sets in opposition to the action of hypnosis – the waking of the free will; and to suggestion – the deliverance from possession by fixed ideas and psychopathological complexes; it sets in opposition to evocation by necromancy – the ascent towards the deceased effected by the force of love; and to the means of constraint employed by ceremonial magic with respect to elemental beings (gnomes, undines, sylphs and salamanders) – the gain of their confidence and friendship by corresponding acts; it opposes to the procedures of the practical Cabbala, which have the aim of subjugating "evil spirits" (in the sense of the fallen hierarchies) – their Transformation into servants of their own accord by resistance to the special temptations of each of them. For they also are waiting "for the revealing of the sons of God", and this revealing signifies for them, in the first place, inaccessibility to their temptations. Resist the devil, and the devil will be your friend. A devil is not an atheist; he does not doubt God. The faith which he lacks is faith in man. And the act of sacred Magic with respect to such a devil is that of re-establishing his faith in man. The purpose of the trials of JOB was not to dispel the doubts of God, but rather those of the devil. Those doubts once dispelled, who was it then who labored to give to Job all that he had lost, if not the same being who had formerly deprived him of everything? Job's enemy became his voluntary servant – and "voluntary servant" means to say <u>friend</u>. Sacred Magic, finally, opposes to the fluidic transfusion of magnetism – the practice of taking upon oneself the illnesses and infirmities of others, according to St. Paul's precept:–

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians

vi, 2)

It is in this way that saints practice sacred Magic. They would not project their forces, their vitality or their fluids into someone else, but on the contrary would rather take from him that which was unhealthy in him. St. LIDVINA, for example, who never left her bed or her room for many long years, once smelt strongly of alcohol. At the same time the cure of an alcoholic was effected in the town (Schiedam) where she lived.

Having advanced this list of contraries, I do not have the intention of judging, still less of condemning – hypnosis, magnetism, suggestion, all evocation, ceremonial magic dealing with Nature, and practical Cabbala aspiring to the subjugation of "evil spirits". The sole aim here is to make clear that which differentiates sacred Magic from these practices. They can also serve the good. But sacred Magic can do nothing else than to serve the good.

Are there "grimoires" of sacred Magic? Yes, if one understands by "grimoire" an arsenal of arms or implements which one makes use of. This arsenal is composed of formulas, gestures, and figures reproduced by the gestures. But one must not choose them arbitrarily. The choice must be reserved either according to profound knowledge confirmed by revelation or otherwise to direct revelation confirmed subsequently by the knowledge of experience.

With regard to the arsenal of formulas, it is accessible almost entirely to everyone. For the principal source of the formulas of sacred Magic is the Holy Scripture, the Bible, comprising the Old and New Testaments. The Gospel according to St. John occupies a prominent place here, for it consists almost completely of magical formulas. Then come the three other Gospels and the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation). One also finds magical formulas in the Epistles and in the Acts of the Apostles. As for the Old Testament, one finds them above all in the Psalms, the Book of Genesis (Bereshith), Ezekiel and the other prophets. There are also the magical formula in the liturgical ritual of the Church and in the written or oral tradition leading back to the saints and to the great mystics. Equally, the text of the Emerald Table belongs to the arsenal of formulas of sacred Magic.

Concerning the "silent" part (i.e. the gestures and figures reproduced by gestures) of sacred Magic, their choice must be in the same way either confirmed by revelation or indicated by it. They consist, as a rule, of the Ritual gestures employed by the traditional Church (Roman or Greek-Orthodox) and of gestures reproducing a certain number of geometrical figures. Thus it is necessary sometimes to kneel down, sometimes to be upright, sometimes to prostrate oneself; sometimes it is necessary to do the gesture of benediction, sometimes that of protection or that of liberation, etc.

These formulas and gestures are not secret, but one should not b e t r a y them. "To betray" does not signify to divulge them, to make them known to others; one does not betray a magical formula which is known to nearly everyone solely by the fact of making it known to others. But one betrays it when one uproots it from its proper, sacred ground and from the sacred context of the magical operation to which it belongs and when one brings it down to a lower plane, i.e. when one abuses it. It is the same as with the formulas by means of which consecration operates in the Mass. Everyone knows them, but they operate

only when they are pronounced in the sacred context of the Mass by a person who is alone legitimately authorized to do it. It is not secrecy which enables their operation; it is the context and it is the niveau of the operation, and it is the legitimacy of the operant or celebrant. Therefore one does not betray the formulas of consecration by printing them in the missals. But one certainly would betray them if one were to use them, as a layman, in an arbitrarily improvised or invented "mass". The mystery is protected in another way than the secret. Its protection is its light, while the protection of a secret is its obscurity. As for an arcanum, which is a middle degree between the mystery and the secret, it is the twilight which protects it. For it reveals itself and hides itself at the same time by means of symbolism. Symbolism is a twilight for arcana. Thus the Arcana of the Tarot are formulas rendered visible and accessible to everyone. They were entertaining in the past for thousands of people; they were used for telling fortunes by hundreds of people; a few experienced in them a revelatory effect. Court de GEBELIN was astonished by them; Eliphas LÉVI was captivated by them; PAPUS was inspired by them; others followed them and became subject to the strange and almost irresistible attraction of the Tarot – they studied it, meditated and commented upon it, and interpreted it, being stimulated, inspired and illumined by "something" in the Tarot which simultaneously reveals itself and hides itself in the twilight of its symbols. And ourselves? Where do we stand in relation to the Tarot? We shall have a sure knowledge of this after the XXIInd Letter, dedicated to the Minor Arcana of the Tarot. –

X X X X X X X

The throne on which "The Empress" is seated represents the second H É of the "Tetragrammaton" of sacred Magic, i.e. its manifested entirety; her crown corresponds to the Y O D, the scepter to the first H É and the coat-of-arms to the V A V of the Tetragrammaton. This is why we have defined the throne as "the role of sacred Magic in the world and in history". One could equally say that it is the phenomenon of the whole of sacred Magic as it has manifested itself, as it is manifesting itself, and as it will manifest itself in the history of mankind. It is its historical body which reveals its soul and spirit. By "body" I mean that which makes possible direct action in the world of facts. Thus the "arsenal" or store of magical formlas and gestures which one uses in the practical exercise of sacred Magic are part of its "body". The Rituals of its universal operations, destined to serve the whole of mankind, and transcending space and time, i.e. the seven sacraments of the Church, in so far as they are rituals, are equally part of its "body". Then those who have the mission or the ability to perpetuate the tradition of sacred Magic are likewise part of it. This body is like a tree which has a certain number of branches which bear many leaves, but whose roots are in heaven and whose top is turned downwards. It has only one trunk and a sap which nourishes and vivifies all its branches with their innumerable leaves.

Is this "the Tree of the Sephiroth" of the Cabbala? Or rather the

Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? Or, again, the Tree of Life? --

The fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil has had a triple effect: toil, suffering and death. Toil or work took the place of mystical union with God, which union (without effort) is the teaching of the first Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Magician". Suffering replaced the directly reflected revelation or Gnosis, whose direct revelation is the teaching of the second Arcanum of the Tarot, "The High Priestess". And death entered into the domain of Life or creative, sacred Magic, which is the teaching of the third Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Empress". For sacred Magic is that L i f e which was before the Fall. The Gnosis of the 2nd Arcanum is that Consciousness which was before the Fall. And the mystical Spontaneity of the 1st Arcanum is that relationship between man and God which was before the Fall. This primordial spontaneity gave the impulse and direction to evolution and the development of the human being. It was not the struggle for existence, described by Charles DARWIN a century ago, which was the fundamental directing impulse towards the ideal or aim of evolution before the Fall, but rather that state of being which we designate today by the term "mystical union". The principle of struggle or toil (effort) only came into play after the Fall. Similarly, suffering did not play the role of awakening consciousness before the time of the Fall; this role was then reserved for directly reflected revelation, or Gnosis. Neither did death then play the role of liberating consciousness, through the destruction of the forms which enclose it, that it has played since the Fall. Instead of the destruction of forms, their continual transformation took place. This was operated by the perpetual action of Life effecting the metamorphosis of forms, in conformity with changes in the consciousness using them. This perpetually liberating constructive action of Life was — and still is — the function of sacred or divine Magic. And it is this transforming function, opposed to the destructive function of death, that Moses' Genesis designates by the symbol of the "Tree of Life".

For the Fall changed the destiny of humanity - so that Mystical Union became replaced by struggle or toil, Gnosis by suffering and sacred Magic by death. This is why the formula announcing the Good News that the effects of the Fall can be overcome and that the way of human evolution can return to that of mystical union instead of struggle, that immediately reflected revelation or Gnosis can replace the teaching of the truth through suffering, and that sacred Magic or transforming life can take the place of destructive death — this is why, I say, this formula has the tenor of the following:

I AM the W A Y, the T R U T H, and the L I F E (John xiv, 6)

This formula is at the same time the summation of the first three Arcana of the Tarot, i.e. the arcanum of the true w a y or mystical Spontaneity, the arcanum of revealed

truth or Gnosis, and the arcanum of transforming life or sacred Magic.

Sacred Magic is therefore the Tree of Life, inaccessible to arbitrary foolhardiness, but manifesting itself in the whole history of mankind by the agency of those who know how to say, "Ecce ancilla Domini, mihi fiat secundum verbum tuum" (cf. Luke i, 38 "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word") or rather, "Ecce servus Domini, faciam secundum verbum tuum" ("Behold the servant of the Lord, I will do according to your word"). It manifests itself in human history by a miracle; namely, that human supra-biological life continues from century to century, from millennium to millennium, and its source does not dry up; that the sacred fire above the altars of hearts and the altars of stone is not extinguished from century to century, from millennium to millennium; that Goodness, Truth and Beauty do not lose their attraction from century to century; that, in spite of all, there is Faith, Hope and Charity in the World; that there are saints, sages, geniuses, benefactors, and healers; that pure thought, poetry, music, and prayer are not being engulfed by the void; that there is this universal miracle of human history; and that the miraculous exists. Yes, the miraculous does exist, for life is only a series of miracles, if we understand by "miracle" not the absence of cause (i.e. that it would not be caused by anyone or anything – which would be more the concept of "pure chance"), but rather the visible effect of an invisible cause, or the effect on a lower plane due to a cause on a higher plane.

Incomprehensibility is not at all the distinctive quality of a miracle; on the contrary, a miracle is often essentially more comprehensible than a so-called "natural" and "explained" phenomenon. It is, for example, more comprehensible that Teresa NEUMANN, in Bavaria, lived for decades without any food other than the host – in view of the fact that matter is only condensed energy and energy is only "condensed" consciousness – than the "well explained" fact of a single cell which, in multiplying itself by division, produces quite different cells for the brain, muscles, bones, hair, etc., which group themselves in such a way that the result is a complete human or animal organism. When someone tells me that all this is explained by heredity, that such are the "genes" contained within the first cell that it results in such an organism, then I nod in agreement, but I am completely hoodwinked.

The Tree of L i f e is the source of the miracles of generation, transformation, rejuvenation, healing and liberation. Conscious participation with it, "ad perpetranda miracula rei unius" as the Emerald Table expresses it, is the Great Work of sacred Magic.

One can understand the ideal of the Great Work when one compares it with the ideal of modern exact science. For the ideal of science is power – practical technical power and intellectual technical power. The intellectual aspect of the scientific ideal is to reduce the

multiplicity of phenomena to a limited number of laws and then reduce these to a single simple formula. It is a matter, in the last analysis, of mechanizing the intellect in such a manner that it calculates the world instead of understanding it. Then one would attain intellectual technical power.

The practical aspect of the scientific ideal is revealed in the progress of modern science from the XVIII th century to the present day. Its essential stages are the discoveries and putting into man's service, successively, steam, electricity, and atomic energy. But as different as these appear to be, these discoveries are based only on a single principle, namely the principle of the destruction of matter, by which energy is freed in order to be captured anew by man so as to be put at his service. It is so with the little regular explosions of petrol which produce the energy to drive a car. And it is so with the destruction of atoms, by means of the technique of neutron bombardment, which produces atomic energy. That it is a matter of coal, petrol or hydrogen atoms, is not important; it is always a case of the production of energy as a consequence of the destruction of matter. For the practical aspect of the scientific ideal is the domination of Nature by means of putting into play the principle of destruction or death.

Imagine, dear Unknown Friend, efforts and discoveries in the opposite direction, in the direction of construction or life. Imagine, not an explosion, but rather the blossoming out of a constructive "atomic bomb". It is not too difficult to imagine, because each little acorn is such a "constructive bomb" and the oak is only the visible result of the slow "explosion" – or blossoming out – of this "bomb". Imagine it and you will have the ideal of the "Great Work" or the idea of the Tree of Life. The image itself of the "Tree" comprises the negation of the technical and mechanical element. It is the living synthesis of celestial light and elements of the earth. Not only is it the synthesis of heaven and earth, it constantly synthesizes that which descends from above and that which ascends from below.

Now, the ideal of Hermeticism is contrary to that of science. Instead of aspiring to power over the forces of Nature by means of the destruction of matter, Hermeticism aspires to conscious participation with the constructive forces of the world on the basis of an alliance and a cordial communion with them. Science wants to compel Nature to obedience to the will of man such as it is; Hermeticism – or the philosophy of sacred Magic – on the contrary wants to purify, illumine and change the will and nature of man in order to bring them into harmony with the creative principle of Nature (natura naturans) and to render them capable of receiving its willingly bestowed revelation.

The Great Work, as an ideal, is therefore the state of the human being who is in peace, alliance, harmony and collaboration with Life. This is the "fruit of the Tree of Life".

But does not the Bible say that the approach to the Tree of Life is defended and that "at the east of the garden of Eden God placed the Cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the Tree of Life" (Genesis iii, 24)?

Yes, it is defended, but the defense is not absolute and general; it is specific. Read what

the Bible says here:- Then the LORD God said: "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever..." (Genesis iii, 22).
Now, it is a matter here of defense against putting forth the hand and taking from the Tree of Life, and it is this and only this that the flaming sword of the Guardian of Eden prevents.

"Putting forth the hand and taking" - this is the motif, the method and the ideal of science. It is the will-to-power underlying the scientific attitude which is prevented by the flaming sword of the Guardian of Eden from repeating the act committed with respect to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. But the motif, method and ideal of Hermeticism is contrary to that of science. The will-to-serve underlies the fundamental Hermetic attitude. Instead of putting forward the hand to take, the human being opens his mind, his heart and his will to receive that which will be graciously bestowed upon him. The inspiration, illumination and intuition that he seeks are not so much conquests accomplished by his will; they are rather gifts from above, preceded by the efforts of the human will endeavoring to become worthy.

The flaming sword of the Guardian of Eden is a weapon of divine Magic. This means to say that it is essentially a "yes" and not a "no". It is essentially constructive and not destructive. In other words, it invites, encourages and directs all those who are worthy, all that which is worthy in each person, to the benefits of the Tree of Life; and it forbids, discourages and sends away all those who are unworthy, and also all that which is unworthy in each person. The flaming sword is a benediction to those who seek the Tree of Eternal Love which is the Tree of Life, and at the same time, by the very fact that it blesses, the flaming force prohibits those who seek the Tree of Life in order to take possession of its fruits. The sword of the Holy Guardian of Eden is always active in the spiritual life of humanity. It calls to seekers and it repulses thieves. Thanks to it Hermeticism, the millennial-old tradition of uninterrupted pursuit of the ideal of the Great Work, exists - in spite of all the chimera, all the illusions and all the forms of charlatanism, conscious and unconscious, which accompany this pursuit.

The sword of the Holy Guardian of Eden works the magical revelation of the Tree of Life - for everyone, without distinction. It is the magical word stirring ablaze in human souls ardent desire for the Great Work, the Miraculous Life. It "will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick" (Matthew xii, 20), because its mission is divine, and it is characteristic of the divine not only to save every droplet of sincerity and every spark of love, but also to make them grow and spread. Because in spite of all corruption that historical experience brings to the light of day, in totality nothing is corrupt. The traditional teaching of the Church that "natura vulnerata, non deleta" ("Nature is wounded but not destroyed") is absolutely true.

The Tree of Life is the unity or synthesis of consciousness, force and matter. Three is its number... because it reflects the unity of the Holy Trinity.

It is at the same time the unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic. This is why one should not separate them. "The Empress", as a symbol of sacred Magic, contains within itself Gnosis and Mysticism - or "The High Priestess" and "The Magician". These Arcana are incomprehensible when one takes them separately. In general, all the Arcana of the Tarot are

comprehensible only when considered as a whole.

But it so happens that in human consciousness one separates the inseparable – in forgetting the unity. One takes a branch of the Tree and cultivates it as if it exists without the trunk. The branch can have a long life, but it degenerates. It is thus that in forgetting Gnosis and Mysticism, Magic has been taken separately which being a branch separated from its trunk, ceased to be sacred Magic and became arbitrary or personal magic. This latter mechanized to a certain degree and became what one understands as "ceremonial magic", which flourished from the time of the Renaissance until the XVIIth century. It was par excellence the magic of the humanists, i.e. it was no longer divine magic, but human magic. It no longer served God, but man. Its ideal became the power of man over visible and invisible Nature. Later, invisible Nature was also forgotten. Visible Nature was concentrated upon alone, with the aim of subjugating it to the human will. It is in this way that technological and industrial science originated. It is the continuation of the ceremonial Magic of the humanists, stripped of its occult element, just as the former is the continuation of sacred Magic, but deprived of its gnostic and mystical element.

What I am saying here is perfectly in accord with what PAPUS (and Eliphas LÉVI) thought, concerning which one cannot say that he was speaking without knowledge of the matter. For PAPUS said:–

> "Ceremonial Magic is an operation by which man seeks, through the play of natural forces, to compel the invisible powers of diverse orders to act according to what he requires of them. To this end he seizes them, he surprises them, as it were, in projecting, through the effect of correspondences which suppose the Unity of Creation, forces of which he himself is not master, but to which he can open extraordinary outlets... Ceremonial Magic is of an order absolutely identical to our industrial science. Our power is almost nothing alongside that of steam, electricity and dynamite; but in opposing them by appropriate combinations to natural forces as powerful as themselves, we concentrate them, we accumulate them, we compel them to transport or to smash weights which would annihilate us..." (Papus, "Traité élémentaire de Science Occulte, Paris, 1888, pp. 425-426)

What more is there to say? One can, perhaps, add another statement by PAPUS, defining the relationship between the "scientific mage" or occultist and the sorceror, as follows :–

> "The sorceror is to the occultist as the worker is to the engineer".
>
> (Papus, "La Science des Mages", Paris, 1974, p. 68)

The sorceror is therefore only an amateur occultist.

Just as contemporary technological science is the direct continuation of ceremonial magic, contemporary profane art is merely a continuation of Gnosis and Magic which have lost sight of mysticism and become separated from it. Because art seeks to reveal and applies itself to do this in a magical manner.

The ancient mysteries were only sacred art – being in the background conscious of Mysticism and Gnosis. But after forgetting this background or, so to say, after this background receded too far into the background, there remained a gnosis (or a

"revelationism") deprived at root of mystical discipline and experience. In this way "creative art" originated, and the Mysteries became theater, revelationary mantras became verses, hymns became songs, and revelationary "pantomimic" movements became dances, while cosmic myths gave way to belles lettres.

Art, being separated from the living organism of the unity of the Tetragrammaton, is necessarily removed from Gnosis as well as from sacred Magic – from which it springs and to which it owes its substance and the sap of its life. The pure revelation of Gnosis has become more and more a game of the imagination and the power of magic has degenerated more and more into aesthetics. Richard WAGNER understood this and wanted to remedy it. The work of WAGNER followed the aim of the reintegration of art – to effect reunion with Gnosis and Mysticism so that it becomes sacred Magic again.

Joséphin PÉLADAN endeavored to do the same in France. He even had dazzling success but this was short-lived – for reasons which he well understood subsequently. Silence is the indispensable climate for all revelation; noise renders it absolutely impossible.

The religious life, as everyone knows, is not exempt from decadence – when it ceases to be founded in Mysticism, illumined by Gnosis, and actuated by sacred Magic. It grows cold without the fire of Mysticism, it clouds over without the light of Gnosis and becomes impotent without the power of sacred Magic. There remains then only theological legalism supported by moral legalism – hence the origin of the religion of the scribes and Pharisees at the time of the New Testament. This is the twilight which precedes its night – its death.

FAITH is the experience of the divine breath; HOPE is the experience of the divine light; and LOVE is the experience of the divine fire. There is no authentic and sincere religious life without faith, hope and love; but there is no faith, hope and love without mystical experience or, what is the same thing, without grace. No intellectual argument can awaken faith; what it can do, at best, is to eliminate obstacles, misunderstandings and prejudices, and thus help to establish the state of interior silence necessary for the experience of the divine breath. But faith itself is the divine breath whose origin is found neither in logical reasoning, nor in aesthetic impression, nor in human moral action.

The divine and flaming W e r d shines in the world of the silence of the soul and "moves" it. This movement is living faith – therefore real and authentic – and its light is hope or illumination, while all springs from the divine f i r e which is love or union with God. The three "ways" or stages of traditional mysticism – purification, illumination and union – are those of the experience of the divine breath or faith, divine light or hope, and divine fire or love. These three fundamental experiences of the revelation of the divine constitute the triangle of life – for no spirit, no soul and equally no body would be able to live if entirely deprived of all love, all hope and all faith. They would then be deprived of all vital élan (the vital élan advanced by Henri BERGSON as the general impulse behind evolution). But what else could this be but some form of love, hope and faith operating at the basis of all life? It is because "in the beginning was the Word" and "all things were made through him" (John i,3), and it is because the primordial Word still vibrates in all that lives, that the world still lives and has the vital élan

which is nothing other than love, hope and faith inspired from the beginning by the Creative Word.

In this sense BROWNING was right in having said, "Nature is supernatural". For its supernatural origin still manifests itself in its vital élan. To want to live! My God, what a profession of faith, what a manifestation of hope and what ardor of love!

Love, hope and Faith are at one and the same time the essence of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. F A I T H is the source of magic power and all the miracles spoken of in the Gospels are attributable to it. The revelation – all the revelations of Gnosis have only one aim: to give, to maintain and to increase H O P E. The book that "The High Priestess" holds on her knees is written so that hope may continue unceasingly. For all revelation which does not give hope is useless and superfluous. Mysticism is fire without reflection; it is union with the divine in L O V E. It is the primary source of all life, including religious, artistic and intellectual life. Without it, everything becomes pure and simple technique. Religion becomes a body of techniques of which the scribes and Pharisees are the engineers; it becomes legalistic.

A r t becomes a body of techniques – be they traditional or innovative – a field of imitation or experiences.

S c i e n c e, lastly, becomes a body of techniques of power over Nature.

But the Arcanum of sacred Magic, "The Empress" calls us to take another way. It calls us to the way of regeneration, instead of that of degeneration. It invites us to de-mechanize all that which has become solely intellectual, esthetic and moral technique. One has to de-mechanize in order to become a mage. For sacred Magic is through and through Life – that life which is revealed in the Mystery of the Blood. May our problems become so many cries of the blood (of the heart), may our words be borne by blood, and may our actions be as effusions of blood! This is how one becomes a mage. One becomes a mage by becoming essential – as essential as the blood is.

Eliphas LÉVI puts as the subtitle to the chapter devoted to the third Arcanum of the Tarot in his Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual : "Plenitudo Vocis". His choice is more than happy, it is inspired! Indeed! – "fullness of voice" – could one better describe the essence itself of sacred Magic!? Yes, it is "fullness of voice" with which sacred Magic is concerned; it is the voice full of blood; it is the blood which becomes voice. It is being in which there is nothing mechanical and which is entirely living.

The third Arcanum of the Tarot, being the Arcanum of sacred Magic, is by this very fact the Arcanum of generation. For generation is only an aspect of sacred Magic. If sacred Magic is the union of two wills – human and divine – from which a miracle results, generation itself also presupposes the trinity of the generator, the generant and the generated. Now, the generated is the miracle resulting from the union of the principles of generator and generant. Whether it is a matter of a new idea, a work of art, the birth of a child, is not important; it is always the same law of generation which operates; it is always the same Arcanum – that of fecundity – which is in play; and it is always the same mystery of the Incarnation of the Word which is the divine prototype here.

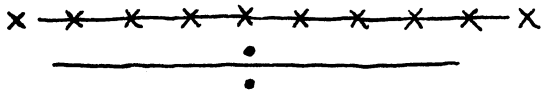
We have said above that sacred Magic is Life such as it was before the Fall. As life is always generative, the Arcanum of sacred Magic is at the same time that of generation before

the Fall – vertical generation, from a higher plane to a lower one – instead of horizontal generation, which is accomplished on a single plane.

The formula of this mystery is well known:- ET INCARNATUS EST DE SPIRITU SANCTO EX MARIA VIRGINE.

It contains the trinity of the Generator above, of the Generant below, and the Generated, -- or: the Holy Spirit, the Holy Virgin, and the God-Man. It is at the same time the formula of sacred Magic in general, because it expresses the mystery of the union of divine will and human will in the element of the blood. The blood – in its triple sense, mystical, gnostic and magical -- is the "scepter" or power of sacred Magic.

At this point, dear Unknown Friend, I shall withdraw and leave you alone with your A n g e l. It is not fitting that my human voice arrogates the right of uttering things which are a more profound continuation of what is outlined above.



Letter IV :-

Meditation on the fourth Major Arcanum of the Tarot-

"THE EMPEROR" --

"L'EMPEREUR"

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
(Luke xiii, 35)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The less superficial a person is – and the more he knows and is capable of – the greater is his authority. To be something, to know something and to be capable of something is what endows a person with authority. One can also say that a person has authority in proportion to what he unites within himself of the profundity of mysticism, the direct wisdom of gnosis and the productive power of magic. Whosoever has this to a certain degree can found a "school". Whosoever has this to a still higher degree can "lay down the law".

It is authority alone which is the true and unique power of law. Compulsion is only an expedient to which one takes recourse in order to remedy a lack of authority. Where there is authority, i.e. where there is present the breath of sacred Magic filled by the rays of light of Gnosis emanated from the profound fire of Mysticism, there compulsion is superfluous.

Now, "The Emperor" of the fourth Arcanum of the Tarot does not have a sword or any other weapon. He rules by means of the scepter, and by the scepter alone. This is why the first idea that the Card naturally evokes is that of the authority underlying law. The thesis which proceeds from meditation on the three preceding Arcana is that all authority has its source in the divine Ineffable Name Y H V H and that all law derives from this.

The implication here is that the human bearer of true authority does not replace divine authority but, on the contrary, cedes his place to it. He has to renounce something to this end.

The Card teaches us in the first instance that "The Emperor" has renounced compulsion and violence. He has no weapons. His right hand holds the scepter forward, on which his gaze is fixed, and his left hand holds his tightly-fastened belt. He is neither standing nor sitting. He is simply leaning back against a lowered throne and has only one foot placed on the ground. His legs are crossed. The shield adorned with an eagle rests on the ground at his side. Lastly, he is wearing a large and heavy crown.

The context of the Card expresses active renunciation rather than the renunciation of constraint alone. The Emperor has renounced ease, being not seated. He has renounced walking, being in a leaning position and having his legs crossed. He may neither advance in order to take the offensive, nor move back in order to retreat. His station is by his seat and his coat-of-arms. He is on sentry-duty and as such he does not have freedom of movement. He is a guardian bound to his post.

What he guards is fundamentally the Scepter. Now the scepter is not an implement with which one is empowered to do something or other. It is, from a practical point of view, a symbol serving nothing. The Emperor has therefore renounced all action having pledged his right hand to the scepter that he holds before him, whereas his left hand holds his fastened belt.

It is no longer free, because the Emperor restrains himself with it. It serves the function of holding the impulsive and instinctive nature of the Emperor in check, so that it does not intervene and divert him from his post as guardian.

The Emperor has therefore renounced movement by means of his legs and action by means of his arms. At the same time, he wears a large and heavy Complete (Entire) crown — and we have already meditated on the meaning of the crown with regard to that of "The Empress", which has a double meaning. It is the sign of legitimacy, on the one hand, but it is also the sign of a task or a mission by which the crown is charged from above. Thus every crown is essentially a crown of thorns. Not only is it heavy, but also it calls for a painful restraint with regard to the thought and free or arbitrary imagination of the personality. It certainly emits rays outwards, but these same rays become thorns for the personality within. They play the role of nails piercing and crucifying each thought or image of the personal imagination. Here true thought receives confirmation and subsequent illumination; false or irrelevant thought is rivetted and reduced to impotence. The crown of the Emperor signifies the renunciation of freedom of intellectual movement, just as his arms and legs signify his renunciation of freedom of action and movement. He is deprived of the three so-called "natural" liberties of the human being — those of opinion, word and movement. Authority demands this.

But this is not all. The shield bearing an eagle rests on the ground at his side. The Emperor does not hold it with his hand, as the Empress does. The shield is certainly there, but it belongs rather to the throne than to the person of the Emperor. This means to say that the purpose for which the Emperor is on sentry-duty is not his but that of the throne. The Emperor does not have a personal mission; he has renounced this in favor of the throne. Or, in esoteric terms, he has no name; he is anonymous, because the name — the mission — belongs to the throne. He is not there in his own name but rather in the name of the throne. This is the fourth renunciation of the Emperor — the renunciation of a personal mission or a name, in the esoteric meaning of the word.

It is said that "Nature has a horror of emptiness" (horror vacui). The spiritual counter-truth here is that, "the Spirit has a horror of fullness". It is necessary to create a natural emptiness — and this is what renunciation achieves — in order for the spiritual to manifest itself. The beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew v, 3-12) state this fundamental truth. The first beatitude — "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!" — means to say that those who are rich in spirit, who are filled with the "spiritual kingdom of man", have no room for the "kingdom of heaven". Revelation presupposes emptiness — space put at its disposal — in order to manifest itself. This is why it is necessary to renounce personal opinion in order to receive the revelation of the truth, personal action in order to become an agent for sacred Magic, the way (or method) of personal development in order to be guided by the Master of ways, and one's personally chosen mission in order to be charged with a mission from above.

The Emperor has established in himself this fourfold emptiness. This is why he is "Emperor"; this is why he is Authority. He has made a place in himself for the Divine

Name Y H V H, which is the source of authority. He has renounced personal intellectual initiative – and the emptiness which results is filled by divine initiative or the Y O D of the sacred name. He has renounced action and movement – and the void which results is filled by revelationary action and magical movement from above, i.e. by the H É and V A V of the divine name. Finally, he has renounced his personal mission, he has become anonymous – and the emptiness which results is filled with <u>authority</u> (or the second H É of the divine name), i.e. he becomes the source of <u>law</u> and <u>order</u>.

Lao Tzu reveals the arcanum of <u>Authority</u> in his TAO TE CHING. He says:-

" Thirty spokes unite in one nave, and because of the part where n o t h i n g exists we have the use of a carriage wheel. Clay is molded into vessels, and because of the space where n o t h i n g exists we are able to use them as vessels. Doors and windows are cut out in the walls of a house, and because they are e m p t y spaces, we are able to use them. Therefore, on the one hand we have the benefit of existence, and on the other, we make use of non-existence "(XI). And again:-- " Be humble, and you will remain entire. Be bent, and you will remain straight. Be vacant, and you will remain full. Be worn, and you will remain new. He who has little will receive. He who has much will be embarrassed. Therefore the Sage keeps to One (Unity) and becomes the standard for the World. He does not display himself; therefore he shines. He does not approve himself; therefore he is noted. He does not praise himself; therefore he has merit. He does not glory in himself; therefore he excels. And because he does not compete; therefore no one in the world can compete with Him" (XXII) (Lao Tzu, "Tao Te Ching"; trsl. Ch'u Ta-Kao, London, 1953, p.23 and p.34)

. . . because he has <u>A u t h e r i t y</u>.

God governs the world by authority, and not by force. If this were not so, there would be neither freedom nor law in the world; and the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer (Pater Noster): "Sanctificetur Nomen tuum. Adveniat Regnum tuum. Et fiat Voluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra", would lose all meaning. He who prays these petitions does so solely with the purpose of affirming and increasing divine <u>authority</u> and not divine power. The God who is almighty – not virtually but actually – has no need at all to be petitioned that his reign may come and that his will may be done. The meaning of this prayer is that God is almighty only in so far as his authority is freely recognized and accepted. Prayer is the act of such recognition and acceptance. One is free to be believing or unbelieving. Nothing and no one can compel us to have faith – no scientific discovery, no logical argument, no physical torture can force us to believe, i.e. to freely recognize and accept the <u>authority</u> of God. But on the other hand, once this authority is recognized and accepted, the powerless becomes powerful. Then divine power <u>can</u> manifest itself – and this is why

it is said that a grain of faith is sufficient to move mountains.

Now, the problem of authority is at the same time of mystical, gnostic, magical and Hermetic significance. It comprises the Christian mystery of Crucifixion and the "mystery of Withdrawal" (Sod hatzimtzum) of the Lurianic Cabbala. Here are some considerations which can help us to arrive at a most profound meditation upon this mystery.

The Christian world worships the Crucifix, i.e. the image expressing the paradox of almighty God reduced to a state of extreme powerlessness. And it is in this paradox that one sees the highest revelation of the Divine in the whole history of mankind. One sees there the most perfect revelation of the God-of-Love (Dieu-Amour). "Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est" ("For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried") says the Christian creed. The only Son of the eternal Father nailed to the cross for our sake – this is what is divinely impressed upon all open souls, including the robber crucified to the right. This impression is unforgettable and inexpressible. It is the immediate breath of the Divine which has inspired and still inspires thousands of martyrs, confessors of the faith, virgins and recluses.

But it is not so that every human being finding himself facing the Crucifix may be thus divinely moved. There are those who react in the opposite way. It was so at the time of Calvary; it is so today.

> "And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying:... If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!" (Matthew xxvii, 39-40)

The chief sacrificers, with the scribes and elders, also mocked him, saying:- "He saved

> others; he cannot save himself! If he is king of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he loves him!" (Matthew xxvii, 42-43)

This is the other reaction. Nowadays we encounter exactly the same, for example, in Soviet radio broadcasts from Moscow. The argument from Moscow is always the same: if God exists, he must know that we, the communists, dethrone him. Why does he not give a visible sign, if not of his power, at least of his existence? Why does he not defend his own interests!? -- This is in other words the old argument: - come down from the cross, and we will believe in you.

I cite these well-known things because they reveal a certain dogma underlying them. It is the dogma or philosophical principle which states that "truth and power are identical; that which is powerful is true and that which is powerless is false". According to this dogma or philosophical principle (which has become that of modern technological science) power is the absolute criterium and supreme ideal of truth. Only that which is powerful is of the divine.

Now there are open and secret worshippers of the idol of power (for it is an idol and the source of all idolatry) – also in Christian factions or in religious and spiritual circles in general. I am not speaking about Christian or spiritually-minded princes

or politicians who covet power, but rather about the adherents to doctrines advancing the primacy of power. Here there are two categories: those who aspire to the ideal of the "superman", and those who believe in a God who is actually almighty and therefore responsible for all that happens.

Amongst esotericists, occultists and magicians there are many – be it openly or secretly – who aspire to the ideal of the superman. In the meantime, they often pose as masters or high-priests worthy of the acclaim of the future superman. They are, at the same time, singularly in agreement in that they raise God far, very far, to the heights of Absolute Abstraction so that he does not discomfort them by his too-concrete presence, and in order that they have room for themselves to be able to develop their own greatness without the rival grandeur of the Divine to discomfort them. They build their individual towers of Babel which fall, as a rule, according to the law of all towers of Babel, and experience, sooner or later, a salutary fall, as is the teaching of Card XVI of the Tarot. They do not fall from a real height into a real abyss; it is only from an imaginary height that they fall and they fall only to the ground; i.e. they learn the lesson that we human beings of today have all learned or have still to learn.

The worship of the idol of power conceived of as the "superman", above all when one identifies oneself with it, is relatively inoffensive – being, fundamentally, infantile. But this is not so with the other category of power worshippers, namely those who project this ideal onto God himself. Their faith in God depends only on the power of God; if God was powerless, they would not believe in him. It is they who teach that God has created souls predestined to eternal damnation and others predestined to salvation; it is they who make God responsible for the entire history of the human race, including all its atrocities. God, they say, "chastises" his disobedient children by means of wars, revolutions, tyrannies and other similar things. How could it be otherwise? God is almighty, therefore all that happens is only able to happen through his action or with his consent.

The idol of power has such a hold on some human minds that they prefer a God who is a mixture of good and evil, provided that he is powerful, to a God-of-Love who governs only by the intrinsic authority of the divine – by truth, beauty and goodness – i.e. they prefer a God who is actually almighty to the crucified God.

However the Father in the parable of the prodigal child had neither sent his son far from his paternal home in order to lead a life of debauchery, nor had he prevented him from leaving and forced him to lead a life which was pleasing to him (the father). All he did was to a w a i t his return and to go and meet him when the prodigal son was approaching his Father's home. Everything which took place in the story of the prodigal son, save for his return to the Father, was clearly contrary to the will of the Father.

Now the history of the human race since the Fall is that of the prodigal son. It is not a matter of "the law of involution and evolution according to the divine plan" of modern Theosophists, but rather of an abuse of freedom similar to that of the prodigal son. And the key formula of the history of humanity is to be found neither in the progress of

civilization nor in the process of evolution or in any other "process", but rather in the parable of the prodigal son, in the words:

"Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired servants". (Luke xv,18-19)

Is mankind therefore solely responsible for its history? Without a doubt -- because it is not God who has willed it to be as such. God is crucified in it.

One understands this when one takes account of the significance of the fact of human freedom, and likewise the freedom of the beings of the spiritual hierarchies – the Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim. All these beings – including man (the Ischim) – have an existence that is either real or illusory. If they have a <u>real</u> existence, if they are not a mirage, they are independent entities endowed not only with a <u>phenomenal</u> independence but also a <u>noumenal</u> independence. Now, noumenal independence is what we understand by <u>freedom</u>. Freedom, in fact, is nothing other than the real and complete existence of a being created by God. To be free and to exist are synonymous from a moral and spiritual point of view. Just as morality would not exist without freedom, so would an unfree spiritual entity – soul or spirit – not exist for itself, but would be part of another spiritual entity which is free, i.e. which really exists. Freedom is the spiritual existence of beings.

When we read in Scripture that God created all beings, the essential meaning here is that God has given freedom – or existence – to all beings. Freedom once having been given, God does not take it back. This is why the beings of the ten hierarchies mentioned above are <u>immortal</u>. Death -- not separation from the body, but <u>real</u> death – would be the <u>absolute</u> deprivation of liberty, i.e. complete destruction of the existence given by God. But who or what can take the divine gift of freedom, the divine gift of existence, from a being? Freedom, existence, is <u>inalienable</u>, and the beings of the ten hierarchies <u>are</u> immortal. The statement: freedom or existence is inalienable, can be understood as the highest <u>gift</u>, the very greatest value imaginable – then this would be a foretaste of Paradise; or as <u>condemnation</u> to "perpetual existence" – then this would be a foretaste of Hell. Because no one "sends" us anywhere – freedom not being a theater. It is we ourselves who make the choice. Love existence, and you have chosen Heaven; hate it, and there you have chosen Hell.

Now, God is with respect to free beings either the ruling King (in the sense of authority such as that taught by the IVth Arcanum of the Tarot) or the Crucified. He is King with regard to those of his beings who voluntarily accept (who "believe") His authority; he is Crucified with respect to those beings who abuse their freedom and "worship idols", i.e. who replace divine authority by a substitute.

King and Crucified at one and the same time – this is the mystery of Pilate's inscription on the cross at Calvary: I e s u s N a z a r e n u s R e x J u d a e o r u m (cf. John xix, 19: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews").

Almighty and powerless, both at once – this is why miracles of healing in human history were able to be accomplished by saints while bloody wars and disasters raged around them!

Freedom – freedom is the true throne of God and is his cross at the same time. Freedom is the key to comprehension of the role of God in history – to comprehension of the God-of-Love and the God-King, without the sacrilege of making him a tyrant and without the blasphemy of doubting his power or of doubting his very existence... God is all-powerful in history in as much as there is faith; and He is crucified in so far as one turns away from Him.

Thus, divine Crucifixion follows from the fact of freedom or the fact of the real existence of the beings of the ten hierarchies, when it is a matter of a world governed by divine authority and not by compulsion.

Let us turn now to the idea Tzimtzum – the "withdrawal of God" – of the Lurianic school of the Cabbala. The doctrine of Tzimtzum reveals one of the "three mysteries" of the Cabbala :- Sod Hajichud, the mystery of union; Sod Hatzimtzum, the mystery of concentration or divine withdrawal; Sod Hagilgul, the mystery of reincarnation or the revolution of souls. The two other "mysteries" – the mystery of union and that of the revolution of souls – will be treated later, in other Letters (Letter X, for example). Concerning the "mystery of divine withdrawal (or concentration)" which interests us here, it is a question of the thesis that the existence of the universe is rendered possible by the act of contraction of God within Himself. God made a "place" for the world in abandoning a region interior to Himself.

> "The first act of En-Soph, the Infinite Being, is therefore not a step outside but a step inside, a movement of recoil, of falling back upon oneself, of withdrawing into oneself. Instead of emanation we have the opposite, contraction" (Gershom G. SCHOLEM, "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism", London, 1955, p.261).. "The first act of all is not an act of revelation but one of limitation. Only in the second act does God send out a ray of His light and begin His revelation, or rather His unfolding as God the Creator, in the primordial space of His own creation. More than that, every new act of emanation and manifestation is preceded by one of concentration and retraction." (ibid., p.261)

In other words, in order to create the world ex nihilo, God had first to bring the void itself into existence. He had to withdraw within in order to create a mystical space, a space without his presence – the veid.

And it is in thinking this thought that we assist at the birth of Freedom. For, as BERDYAEV has formulated it –

> "Freedom is not determined by God; it is part of the nothing out of which God created the world." (Nicholas Berdyaev, "The Destiny of Man", London, 1937, p.33)

The void – the mystical space from which God withdrew himself through his act of Tzimtzum – is the place of origin of freedom, i.e. the place of origin of an ex-istence which is absolute potentiality, not in any way determined. And all of the beings of the ten created hierarchies are the children of God and Freedom – born of divine Plenitude

and the void. They carry within themselves a "drop" of the void and a spark of God. Their existence, their freedom, is the void within them. Their essence, their spark of Love, is the divine "blood" within them. They are immortal, because the void is indestructible, and the monad proceeding from God is also indestructible. Further, these two indestructible elements – the meonic (μὴ ὄν – me on, void) element and the pleromic (πλήρωμα – pleroma, plenitude) element – are indissolubly bound to one another.

Now, the idea of Tzimtzum, the withdrawal of God in order to create freedom, and that of divine Crucifixion on account of freedom, are in complete accordance. For the withdrawal of God in order to make a space for freedom and his renunciation of the use of his power against the abuse of freedom (within determined limits) are only two aspects of the same idea.

It goes without saying that the idea of Tzimtzum (and that of divine Crucifixion) is inapplicable when God is conceived of in the sense of pantheism. Pantheism, like materialism, does not admit the real existence of individual beings. Therefore the fact of freedom – not merely apparent freedom – is excluded. For pantheism and materialism there is no question – and cannot be – of a divine withdrawal or a divine crucifixion. On the other hand, the Cabbalistic doctrine of Tzimtzum is the only serious explanation that I know of concerning creation ex nihilo which is of a kind to act as a counterbalance to pure and simple pantheism. Moreover, it constitutes a deep link between the Old and New Testament, in bringing to light the cosmic significance of the idea of Sacrifice.

Now, the reflection of the idea of divine Withdrawal and divine Crucifixion is found to be indicated, as we have seen, in the IVth Arcanum of the Tarot, the Emperor. The Emperor reigns by pure authority; he reigns over free beings, i.e. not by means of the sword, but by means of the scepter. The scepter itself bears a globe with a cross above. The scepter therefore expresses in as clear as possible a manner the central idea of the Arcanum: just as the world (the globe) is ruled by the cross, so is the power of the Emperor over the terrestrial globe subject to the sign of the cross. The power of the Emperor reflects divine power. And just as the latter is effected by divine contraction (Tzimtzum) and by voluntary divine powerlessness (Crucifixion), so the power of the Emperor is effected by the contraction of his personal forces (the belt drawn tight by the Emperor) and by voluntary immobility (the crossed legs of the Emperor) at his post (the seat or throne of the Emperor).

The post of the Emperor... What an abundance of ideas concerning the post -- its historical mission, its functions in the light of natural right, and its role in the light of divine right - of the Emperor of Christendom are to be found amongst medieval authors!

As it is suitable that the institution of a City or a kingdom be made according to the model of the institution of the world, similarly it is necessary to draw from (divine) government the order (ratio) of the government (of a city) - this is the fundamental thesis advanced on the subject by St. Thomas AQUINAS ("De Regno" xiv, 1). This is why authors of the Middle Ages could not imagine Christianity without an Emperor, just as they

could not imagine the Universal Church without a Pope. Because if the world is governed hierarchically, Christianity or the Sanctum Imperium cannot be otherwise. Hierarchy is a pyramid which exists only when it is complete. And it is the Emperor who is at its summit. Then come the king, dukes, noblemen, citizens and peasants. But it is the crown of the Emperor which confers royalty to the royal crowns from which the ducal crowns and all the other crowns in turn derive their authority.

The post of the Emperor is nevertheless not only that of the last (or, rather, the first) instance of sole legitimacy. It was also magical, if we understand by magic the action of correspondences between that which is below and that which is above. It was the principle itself of authority from which all lesser authorities derived not only their legitimacy but also their hold over the consciousness of the people. This is why royal crowns one after another lost their lustre and were eclipsed after the imperial crown was eclipsed. Monarchies are unable to exist for long without the Monarchy; kings cannot apportion the crown and scepter of the Emperor among themselves and pose as emperors in their particular countries, because the shadow of the Emperor is always present. And if in the past it was the Emperor who gave luster to the royal crowns, it was later the shadow of the absent Emperor which obscured the royal crowns and, consequently, all the other crowns – those of dukes, princes, counts, etc. A pyramid is not complete without its summit; hierarchy does not exist when it is incomplete. Without an Emperor, there will be, sooner or later, no more kings. When there are no more kings, there will be, sooner or later, no more nobility. When there is no more nobility, there will be, sooner or later, no more bourgeoisie or peasants. This is how one arrives at the dictatorship of the proletariat, the class hostile to the hierarchical principle, which latter, however, is the reflection of the divine order. This is why the proletariat professes atheism.

Europe is haunted by the shadow of the Emperor. One senses his absence just as vividly as in former times one sensed his presence. Because the emptiness of the wound speaks, that which we miss knows how to make us sense it.

Napoleon, eyewitness to the French Revolution, understood the direction which Europe had taken – the direction towards the complete destruction of hierarchy. And he sensed the shadow of the Emperor. He knew what had to be restored in Europe, which was not the royal throne of France – because kings cannot exist for long without the Emperor – but rather the imperial throne of Europe. So he decided to fill the gap himself. He made himself Emperor and he made his brothers kings. But it was to the sword that he took recourse. Instead of ruling by the scepter – the globe bearing the cross – he made the decision to rule by the sword. But, "all who take up the sword will perish by the sword" (Matthew xxvi, 52). Hitler also had the delirium of desire to occupy the empty place of the Emperor. He believed he could establish the "thousand-year Empire" ("das tausendjährige Reich") of tyranny by means of the sword. But again – "all those who live by the sword will perish by the

sword".-

No, the post of the Emperor does not belong any longer either to those who desire it or to the choice of the people. It is reserved to the choice of heaven alone. It has become occult. And the crown, the scepter, the throne and the coat-of-arms of the Emperor are to be found in the catacombs. In the catacombs – this means to say: under absolute protection.

Now, the Emperor of the fourth Card is alone, without a court or retinue. His throne is in no way to be found in a room of the Imperial Palace, but rather in the open – in the open in an uncultivated field, not located in a town. A meager clump of grass by his foot is there as the whole imperial court – as all the witnesses of his imperial splendor. But the clear sky is spread above him. He is a silhouette on the background of the sky. Alone in the presence of the sky – this is how the Emperor is.

One could ask: why is the astonishing fact that the Emperor is found with his throne in the open air (under the starry sky, if you wish) overlooked by so many authors on the Tarot? Why have they not stated the fact that the Emperor is alone, without a court or retinue? I believe that it is because it is rarely that one lets the symbol, the image of the symbol as such, say all that it has to say through its unique context. One lets it say a little, and one is suddenly more interested in one's own thoughts, i.e. in what one has to say oneself, rather than what the symbol has to say.

Yet the Card is specific: the Emperor is alone in open air in an uncultivated field and with a tuft of grass as his only company – save for the sky and the earth. The Card teaches us the arcanum of the authority of the Emperor, although it may be unrecognized, occult, unknown and unappreciated. It is a matter of the crown, the scepter, the throne and the coat-of-arms being guarded, without any witnesses other than the sky and the earth, by a solitary man leaning against the throne, with his legs crossed, wearing the crown, holding the scepter and clasping his belt. It is authority as such and it is the post of authority as such which is expressed here.

Authority is the magic of spiritual profundity filled with wisdom. Or, in other words, it is the result of magic based on gnosis due to mystical experience. Authority is the second H É of the divine name Y H V H. But it is not the second H É taken separately; it is only when the whole divine name manifests itself. For this reason it is more correct to say that authority is the completely manifested divine name. The completely manifested divine name signifies at the same time a post, the post of the Emperor, or the state of consciousness of the complete synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. And it is this state of consciousness of complete synthesis which is initiation. Initiation understood here not in the sense of ritual nor in the sense of the possession of information held to be secret, but rather in the sense of the state of consciousness where eternity and the present moment are one. It is the simultaneous vision of the temporal and the eternal, of that which is

below and that which is above.

The formula of initiation remains always the same:

"Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum: Quod est inferius, est sicut quod est superius; ET quod est superius, est sicut quod est inferius, Ad perpetranda miracula rei unius." (Tabula Smaragdina, 1-2)

This unity actualized, contemplated, practiced and understood is initiation or "the sanctification of the Divine Name in man", which is the deeper meaning of the first petition of the Pater Noster:- "SANCTIFICETUR NOMEN TUUM".

Now, "The Emperor" signifies the authority of initiation or of the initiate. It is due to the complete divine Name, from the Cabbalistic viewpoint – to the "magical Great Arcanum", from the point of view of magic – and to the "Philosopher's Stone", from the standpoint of alchemy. It is, in other words, the unity and synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic. This unity or synthesis we have designated in the 2nd Letter as "Hermetic Philosophy", bound up with the "Hermetic-philosophical sense". This "Hermetic Philosophy" – it is necessary to repeat – does not signify a philosophy <u>derived</u> or disengaged from the organism of the unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. It <u>is</u> this very unity in manifestation. Hermetic Philosophy is as inseparable from the unity, Mysticism-Gnosis-Magic, as is the second H É from the divine Name. It is the <u>authority</u> or the manifestation of the unity, Mysticism-Gnosis-Magic.

Hermetic Philosophy corresponds to the stage of "verissimum" ("most true") in that which is "verum, sine mendacio, et certum" ("true it is, without falsehood, and certain") in the "epistemological" formula of the Emerald Table. For it is this which is the <u>summary</u> of all mystical experience, gnostic revelation and practical magic. It is spontaneous mystical experience which becomes "true" (verum), or reflected in consciousness (in Gnosis) and then becomes "certain" (certum) through its magical realization – and which is then reflected a second time (the second H É, or the "second Gnosis", of the divine Name) in the domain of pure thought based on pure experience, where it is examined and finally summarized, and thus becomes "most true" (verissimum).

The formula: "Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum" therefore states the principle of epistemology (or gnoseology) of Hermetic Philosophy, with its triple touchstone. This principle can be formulated in several ways. Here is one:- "That which is absolutely subjective (pure mystical experience) must objectivize itself in consciousness and be accepted there as <u>true</u> (gnostic revelation), then prove to be <u>certain</u> by its objective fruits (sacred Magic) and, lastly, prove to be <u>absolutely true</u> in the light of pure thought based on pure subjective and objective experience (Hermetic Philosophy)". It is a matter, therefore, of the four different "senses": the mystical sense or spiritual <u>touch</u>, the gnostic sense or spiritual <u>hearing</u>, the magical sense or sense of spiritual <u>vision</u> and, lastly, the Hermetic-philosophical sense or sense of spiritual <u>comprehension</u>. The triple

touchstone of Hermetic Philosophy is therefore the intrinsic value of a revelation ("verum, sine mendacio"), its constructive fruitfulness ("certum") and its concordance with earlier revelations, with the laws of thought and with all available experience ("verissimum"). In Hermetic Philosophy something is absolutely true, therefore, only when it is of divine origin and bears fruit in conformity with its origin, and is in accordance with the categorical exigencies of thought and experience.

The Hermeticist is therefore a person who is at one and the same time a mystic, a gnostic, a magician and a "realist-idealist" philosopher. He is a realist-idealist philosopher because he relies as much on experience as on speculative thought, as much on facts as on ideas, because facts and ideas are for him only two aspects of the same reality-ideality, i.e. the same truth.

Hermetic Philosophy, being the summary and synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic, is not a philosophy among other philosophies, or a particular philosophical system amongst other particular philosophical systems. Just as the Catholic Church, being catholic or universal, cannot consider itself as a particular church among other particular churches, nor consider its dogmas as religious opinions among other religious opinions or "confessions", so Hermetic Philosophy, being the synthesis of all that which is essential in the spiritual life of humanity, cannot consider itself as a philosophy amongst many others. Presumption? - It would be, without any doubt, a monstrous presumption if it were a matter of human invention instead of revelation from above. In fact, if you have a truth revealed from above, if the acceptance of this truth brings miracles of healing, peace and vivification with it, and if, lastly, it explains to you a thousand unexplained things - that are inexplicable without it - can you then consider it as an opinion among other opinions?

Dogmatism? Yes, if one understands by "dogma" the certainty due to revelations of divine worth which prove fruitful and constructive, and due to the confirmation that they receive from reason and experience together. When one has certainty based on the concordance of Divine revelation, Divine-Human operation and Human understanding, how can one act as if one did not have it? Is it truly necessary to deny three times before the cock crows in order to be accepted into the good company of "free spirits" and "non-dogmatics", and to be chauffeured along with them by the fire of things relating to human creation? Heresy? -- Yes, if by "heresy" one understands the primacy of universal revelation, of good works universally recognized as such, and of the ideal of universality amongst philosophies.

Hermetic philosophy is not a particular philosophy amongst particular existing philosophies. It is not so already for the sole reason that it does not operate with univocal concepts and their verbal definitions, as do philosophies, but rather with arcana and their symbolic expressions. Compare the Emerald Table with "The Critique of Pure Reason" by KANT and you will see the difference. The Emerald Table states the fundamental arcana of mystical-gnostic-magical-philosophical work; "The Critique of Pure Reason" elaborates an

edifice composed of univocal concepts (such as the categories of quantity, quality, relation and modality) which, all together, portray the transcendental method of Kant, i.e. the method of "thinking about the act of thought" or "reflection about reflection". This method, however, is an aspect of the XVIIIth Arcanum of the Tarot ("The Moon"), as we shall see, and this Arcanum, expressed by the symbol of the Card "The Moon", teaches in the Hermetic way the essence of what Kant taught in the philosophical way about the transcendental method.

So, is Hermetic Philosophy only symbolism pure and simple, and has it nothing to do with the methods of philosophical and scientific reasoning?

Yes and no. Yes, in so far as Hermetic Philosophy is of an esoteric nature, i.e. it consists of arcana orientated towards the mystery and expressed in symbols. No, in so far as it exercises a stimulating effect on the philosophical and scientific reasoning of its adherents. It is wrapped, so to say, in a philosophical and scientific intellectual penumbra, which is due to the activity of its adherents pursuing the aim of translating, in so far as it is possible to do so, the arcana and the symbols of Hermetic Philosophy into univocal concepts and verbal definitions. It is a process of crystallization, because the translation of multivocal concepts or arcana into univocal concepts is comparable to the transition from the state of organic life to the mineral state. It is thus that the "occult sciences" – such as the Cabbala, Astrology and Alchemy – are derived from Hermetic Philosophy. These sciences are able to have their own secrets, but the arcana which are reflected in them belong to the domain of Hermetic Philosophy. In so far as the intellectualization of Hermetic Philosophy is of the nature of commentary and corollary, it is legitimate and even indispensable. For then one will translate each arcanum into many univocal concepts – three for example – and, by this very fact, one will help the intellect to habituate itself to think Hermetically, i.e. in multi-vocal concepts or arcana. But when the intellectualization of Hermetic Philosophy pursues the aim of creating an autonomous system of univocal concepts without formal contradiction between them, it commits an abuse. For instead of helping human reason to raise itself above itself, it would set up a greater obstacle for it. It would captivate it instead of freeing it.

The "occult sciences" are therefore derived from Hermetic Philosophy by way of intellectualization. This is why one should not consider symbols – the Major Arcana of the Tarot, for example – as allegorical expressions of theories or concepts of these sciences. For it is the opposite which is true: it is the doctrines of the occult sciences which are derived from symbols – of the Tarot or other symbols – and it is they which are to be considered as intellectually "allegorical" expressions of the symbols and arcana of Hermetic Esotericism. Thus it would not do to say :- the fourth Card "The Emperor" is the symbol of the astrological doctrine concerning Jupiter. One would rather say: the Arcanum of the 4th Card "The Emperor" is also revealed in the astrological doctrine concerning Jupiter. The

correspondence as such remains intact, but there is a world of difference between these two statements here. Because in the case of the first statement, one remains an "astrologer" and nothing but an astrologer; whilst in the case of the second statement, one is thinking as a Hermeticist, although remaining an astrologer if one is one.

Hermetic Philosophy is not composed of the Cabbala, Astrology, Magic and Alchemy. These four branches sprouting from the trunk do not make the trunk, rather they live from the trunk. The trunk is the manifested unity of Mysticism, Gnosis and sacred Magic. There are no theories; there is only experience, including here the intellectual experience of arcana and symbols. Mystical experience is the root, the gnostic experience of revelation is its sap and the experience or practice of sacred Magic is its wood. For this reason its teaching – or the "body" of its tradition – consists of spiritual exercises and all its arcana (including the Arcana of the Tarot) are practical spiritual exercises, whose aim is to awaken from sleep ever-deeper layers of consciousness. Necessary commentaries and corollaries accompany this practice and constitute the "bark" of the trunk. Thus, the "key" to the Apocalypse of St. John is nowhere to be found. For it is not at all a matter of interpreting it with a view to extracting a philosophical, metaphysical or historical system. The key to the Apocalypse is to practice it, i.e. to make use of it as a book of spiritual exercises which awaken from sleep ever-deeper layers of consciousness. The seven letters to the churches, the seven seals of the sealed book, the seven trumpets and the seven vials signify, all together, a "course" of spiritual exercises composed of 28 exercises. For as the Apocalypse is a revelation put into writing, it is necessary, in order to understand it, to establish in oneself a state of consciousness which is suited to receive revelations. It is the state of concentration without effort (taught by the first Arcanum), followed by a vigilant inner silence (taught by the second Arcanum), which becomes an inspired activity of imagination and thought, where the conscious self acts together with super-consciousness (teaching of the third Arcanum). Lastly, the conscious self halts its creative activity and contemplates – in letting pass in review – everything which preceded, with a view to summarizing it (practical teaching of the fourth Arcanum). The mastery of these four psychurgical operations, symbolized by "The Magician", "The High Priestess", "The Empress" and "The Emperor", is the key to the Apocalypse. One will search in vain for another.

The Gospels, likewise, are spiritual exercises, i.e. one has not only to read and re-read them, but also to plunge entirely into their element, to breathe their air, to participate as an eyewitness, as it were, in the events described there – and all this not in a scrutinizing way, but as an admirer, with ever-growing admiration.

The Old Testament also contains parts which are spiritual exercises. The Jewish Cabbalists – the author or authors of the Zohar, for example – made such use of it, and it is thus that the Cabbala originated and that it lives. The difference between Cabbalists and the other faithful depends only on the fact that the former drew spiritual exercises from the

Scripture while the latter studied and believed it.

The aim of spiritual exercises is depth. It is necessary to become deep in order to be able to attain experience and knowledge of profound things. And it is symbolism which is the language of depth – thus arcana, expressed by symbols, are both the means and the aim of the spiritual exercises of which the living Tradition of Hermetic "Philosophy" is composed.

Spiritual exercises in common form the common link that unites Hermeticists. It is not knowledge in common which unites them, but rather the spiritual exercises and the experience which goes hand in hand with them. If three people from different countries were to meet each other, having made the Book of Genesis by Moses, the Gospel of St. John, and the Vision of Ezekiel, the subject of spiritual exercises for many years, they would do so in brotherhood, although the one would know the history of humanity, the other would have the science of healing and the third would make a profound Cabbalist. That which one knows is the result of personal experience and orientation, while depth, the niveau to which one attains – disregarding the aspect and extent of knowledge that one has gained – is what one has in common. Hermeticism, the Hermetic tradition, is in the first place and above all a certain degree of depth, a certain niveau of consciousness. And it is the practice of spiritual exercises which safeguards this.

With respect to the knowledge of individual Hermeticists – and this is applicable to initiates also – it depends upon the individual vocation of each one of them. The task that one pursues determines the nature and the extent not only of knowledge but also of the personal experience upon which this knowledge is based. One has the experience and gains knowledge of that which is necessary for the accomplishment of the task which proceeds from one's individual vocation. In other words, one knows that which is necessary in order to be informed and to be able to orientate oneself in the domain relevant to one's individual vocation. Thus a Hermeticist whose vocation is healing would know things about the relationships existing between consciousness, the system of the "lotus flowers" ("Chakras"), the nervous system and the system of endocrine glands, that another Hermeticist, whose vocation is the spiritual history of humanity, would not know. But this latter, in his turn, would know things ignored by the healer – facts of the past and of the present concerning relationships between spiritual hierarchies and humanity, between that which took place or is taking place above and that which took place or is taking place below.

But this knowing, in so far as it is not a matter of arcana, consists of facts – though often of a purely spiritual nature – and not theories. Thus, for example, "reincarnation" is in no way a theory which one has to believe or not believe. In Hermeticism no one would dream of putting forward a case in order to persuade, or even to dissuade, people of the truth of the "reincarnationist theory". For the Hermeticist it is a fact which is either known through experience or ignored. Just as one does not make propaganda for or against the fact that we sleep at night and wake up anew each morning – for this is a matter of experience – so is the fact that we die and are born anew a matter of experience, i.e, either one has certainty

about it or else one does not. But those who are certain should know that ignorance of reincarnation often has very profound and even sublime reasons associated with the vocation of the person in question. When, for example, a person has a vocation which demands a maximum of concentration <u>in the present</u>, he may renounce all spiritual memories of the past. Because the awakened memory is not always beneficial; it is often a burden. It is so, above all, when it is a matter of a vocation which demands an attitude entirely free of all prejudice, as is the case with the vocations of priest, doctor and judge. The priest, doctor and judge have to concentrate themselves in such a way on the tasks of the present that they must not be distracted by memories of former existences.

One can perform miracles without the memory of former lives, as was the case with the holy vicar of ARS - and one can also perform miracles, wholly in possession of this memory, as was the case with Monsieur PHILIP of LYONS. For reincarnation is neither a dogma, i.e. a truth necessary for salvation, nor a heresy, i.e. contrary to a truth necessary for salvation. It is simply a fact of experience, just as sleep and heredity are. As such, it is neutral. Everything depends on its interpretation. One can interpret it in such a manner as to make it a hymn to the glory of God – and one can interpret it in such a way as to make it a blasphemy. When one says: to forgive is to grant the opportunity to begin again; God forgives more than seventy-times-seven times, always granting us opportunities anew -- what infinite goodness of God! Here is an interpretation to the glory of God.

But when one says: there is a mechanism of infinite evolution and one is morally <u>determined</u> by previous lives; there is no grace, there is only the law of cause and effect— then this is a blasphemous interpretation. It reduces God to the function of the engineer of a moral machine.

Reincarnation is in no way an exception in what is liable to a double interpretation. In fact, every pertinent fact is liable to it. Thus, for example, heredity can be interpreted in the sense of complete determinism, therefore excluding freedom, and thus also morality. Or rather it can be interpreted as a possibility for gradual improvement of the organism in order to render it a more perfect instrument to vocations for posterity. Didn't Abraham receive the promise that the Messiah would come in his lineage? Wasn't this same promise given to David?

Nevertheless, whatever the personal interpretation of a fact may be, a fact remains a fact and it is necessary to know it when one wants to orientate oneself in the domain to which it belongs. Thus, Hermeticists have knowledge of diverse facts, according to their personal vocations, but Hermeticism is nevertheless not the sum-total of knowledge acquired by individuals. It is an organism of arcana expressed in symbols which are at the same time both spiritual exercises and their resulting aptitudes. An arcanum practiced as a spiritual exercise for a sufficient length of time becomes an <u>aptitude</u>. It does not give the pupil knowledge of new facts, but makes him suited to acquire such knowledge when he has need of it. <u>Initiation</u> is the capacity for orientating oneself in every domain and of acquiring

there knowledge of relevant facts – the "key facts". The initiate is one who knows how to attain knowledge, i.e. who knows how to ask, seek and put into practice the appropriate means in order to succeed. Spiritual exercises alone have taught him – no theory or doctrine, however luminous, may in any way have rendered him capable of "knowing how to know". Spiritual exercises have taught him practical sense (and in Hermetic "Philosophy" there is no other sense than the practical) and the infallible effectiveness of the arcanum of the three united endeavors, which is the basis of every spiritual exercise and every arcanum, namely:

"Ask, and it will be given you;
Seek, and you will find;
Knock, and it will be opened to you." (Luke xi, 9)

Thus, Hermetic Philosophy does not teach what one ought to believe concerning God, man and Nature, but it teaches rather how to ask, seek and knock in order to arrive at mystical experience, gnostic illumination and the magical effect of that which one seeks to know about God, man and Nature. And it is after having asked, sought and knocked – and after one has received, found and gained access – that one k n o w s. This kind of knowing – the certainty of the synthetic comprehension of mystical experience, gnostic revelation and magical effect – is the Emperor; this is the practical teaching of the fourth Card of the Tarot.

It is a matter here of the development and usage of the spiritual "fourth sense", i.e. the "Hermetic-philosophical" sense, following the development and usage of the mystical, gnostic and magical senses. The aptitude for "k n o w i n g how to know" is the characteristic trait essential to this sense. We have defined it above (2nd Letter) as the "sense of synthesis". Now we are able to advance and to do so in a much more profound way in defining it as the "i n i t i a t e s e n s e" or the sense of orientation and acquisition of knowledge of essential facts in every domain.

How does this sense function? There is reason to indicate in the first instance that it is not identical with what one customarily designates as "metaphysical sense", since the "metaphysical sense" of metaphysicians is the taste and capacity for living in abstract theories, the liking for the abstract, while the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" is on the contrary due to the orientation towards the concrete – spiritual, psychic and physical. While the "metaphysical sense" operates with the "concept of God", the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" is orientated towards the living God – the spiritual, concrete fact of God. The Christian Celestial Father and the Ancient of Days of the Cabbalists is not an abstract concept; it is not a notion, but rather a being.

The "metaphysical sense" works in such a manner as to deduce – by way of abstraction – the laws of facts and the principles of laws. The initiate sense or the "Hermetic-philosophical" sense, in contrast, perceives through the Facts the entities of the spiritual hierarchies, and through them the living God. For the initiate sense the space between the "supreme Principle" and the domain of facts is not peopled with "laws" and "principles", but rather with living spiritual beings, each endowed with a manner, look, voice

way of speaking and name. For the "initiate sense" the Archangel Michael is not a "law" or "principle". He is a living being whose face is invisible because it has given place to the face of God. This is why he has the name of M I - K H A - E L, i.e. "He who (MI) is as (KHA) God (EL)". No one could endure the vision of the face of Michael, because he is "kha-El", i.e. "like unto God".

The initiate sense or "Hermetic-philosophical" sense is that of concrete spiritual realities. The Hermeticist "explains" facts not by "laws" obtained by abstraction nor, much less still, by "principles" obtained by active abstraction, but rather by proceeding from "abstract facts" to more concrete beings in order to arrive at that which is the most concrete, that alone in existence which is absolutely concrete, i.e. G o d. Because for the initiate sense God is that which is most real, and therefore most concrete. In fact, amongst all that exists, God is that alone which is absolutely real and concrete, while created beings are only relatively real and concrete; and what we designate as "concrete fact" is in reality only an abstraction from divine reality.

This does not mean to say that the Hermeticist is incapable of abstraction and that he necessarily neglects laws and principles. He is a human being and therefore also possesses the "metaphysical sense". In possessing it he makes use of it like everyone, but what makes him a Hermeticist - in the sense of "The Emperor" of the Tarot - is the "Hermetic-philosophical sense". He is as much a Hermeticist as he is endowed with the Hermetic-philosophical sense and makes use of it, while the metaphysical sense alone would never make a Hermeticist, in the proper sense of the word.

Is this not the tragedy of Réné GUÉNON who, being gifted with a developed metaphysical sense and yet lacking the Hermetic-philosophical sense, sought, always and everywhere, the concrete spiritual. And finally, tired of the world of abstractions, he hoped to find liberation from intellectualism by plunging himself into the element of fervor of the Moslem masses at prayer in a Cairo mosque. The last hope of a soul thirsty for mystical experience and languishing in the captivity of the intellect? - If so, may divine mercy grant him what he sought so much.

There is room to remark here that the last orientation of Réné GUÉNON, i.e. towards the faith of simpler people adhering to a more simple religion, is not without reason. For the "Hermetic-philosophical sense" has more in common with the plain and sincere faith of simple people than abstract metaphysics has. For the common believer, God lives; likewise for the Hermeticist. The believer addresses himself to saints and angels; for the Hermeticist they are real. The believer believes in miracles; the Hermeticist lives in the presence of miracles. The believer prays for the living and the dead; the Hermeticist dedicates all his efforts in the domain of sacred Magic to the good of the living and the dead. The believer esteems all that which is traditional; the Hermeticist does likewise. What more is there to say? Perhaps that the Emperor owes his authority not to his power - visible or invisible - over human beings, but rather because he represents them before the face of Heaven. He has authority

not because he is superhuman, but rather because he is very human, because he represents all that which is human. King David was more human than all men of his time. This is why he was anointed by divine order by the prophet Samuel, and for this reason the Eternal gave him the solemn promise that his throne would be established for ever. The throne, the post of representative of humanity, will therefore never perish. And it is this which is the post of the Emperor; it is this which is true authority.

Hermetic Philosophy also has a human ideal to which it aspires. Its spiritual exercises, its arcana, follow the practical aim of realizing the man of authority, the father-man. This is the man who is more human than all others... the man worthy of "the throne of David". -

The human ideal of practical Hermeticism is not the Superman of Nietzsche, nor the superman of India plunged in contemplation of eternity, nor the Superman-hierophant of Gurdjieff, nor the Superman-Philosopher of the Stoic and Vedanta philosophies - no, its human ideal is the man who is human to such a degree that he contains and bears in himself all that which is human, that he may be the guardian of the throne of David.

And the divine? How is it here in that which concerns the manifestation of the Divine?

Practical Hermeticism is A l c h e m y. The ideal of Hermeticism is essentially and fundamentally the alchemical ideal. This means to say: the more one becomes truly human, the more one manifests the divine element underlying human nature, which is the "image and likeness of God" (Genesis i,26). The ideal of Abstraction invites human beings to do away with human nature, to dehumanize. In contrast, the ideal of alchemical Transformation of Hermeticism offers to human beings the way to the realization of true human nature, which is the "image and likeness of God". Hermeticism is the re-humanization of all elements of human nature; it is their return to their true essence. Just as all base metal can be transformed into silver and into gold, so are all the forces of human nature susceptible to transformation into Silver and Gold, i.e. into what they are when they share in the Image and Likeness of God.

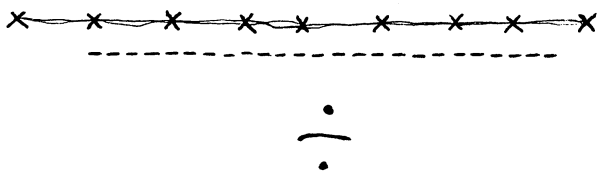
But in order to re-become what they are in their essence, they must be submitted to the operation of s u b l i m a t i o n. Now, this operation is crucifying for that which is base among them and, at the same time, it is the blossoming of that which is their true essence. The C r o s s and the R o s e, the R O S E + C R O S S, is the symbol of this operation of the realization of the truly human man. Thus, "The Emperor" of the Tarot renounces the four arbitrary liberties of human nature. He is, in this sense, crucified. And as the real symbol of the emptiness which is established because of renunciation is the w o u n d - one could say that the Emperor is he who has f o u r w o u n d s.

It is by these four wounds that the manifestation of the divine image and likeness of human nature is accomplished in him.

The divine in human nature.. and what of the Divine which transcends it?

In order for the latter to manifest, it is necessary to have one wound more. It is

necessary to have five wounds. Now, it is the following Card "The P O P E" which will teach us the Arcanum of the manifestation of the Divine transcending human nature by means of the five wounds.



LETTER V:--

Meditation on the fifth Major Arcanum of the Tarot –

"THE POPE"

"LE PAPE"

At vero Malki-tzadek rex Salem, proferens panem et vinum, erat enim sacerdos Dei Altissimi, benedixit ei, et ait:
Benedictus Abram Deo excelso...
et benedictus Deus excelsus...
(Genesis xiv, 18-20)
(And Melchizadek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said:
Blessed be Abram by God Most High...
and blessed be God Most High...)

Ego sum via et veritas et vita: nemo venit ad Patrem, nisi per me.
(John xiv, 6)
(I am the way, the truth and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me.)

De cetero nemo mihi molestus sit: ego enim stigmata Domini Jesu in corpore meo porto. (Galatians vi, 17)
(Henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The Card "The Pope" puts us in the presence of the act of benediction. It is essential to have this in mind when one undertakes the interpretation not only of the structure of the whole Card but also of each of its particular elements. One should therefore never lose from sight that in the first place it is a matter of benediction and everything associated with it – no matter who "the Pope" may be or who the acolytes kneeling before him are, and no matter what the two columns behind "the Pope" signify, and no matter what his tiara and the triple cross he is holding symbolize. What is benediction? What is its source and its effect? Who has the authority to bestow benediction? What role does it play in the spiritual life of humanity?

Now, benediction is more than a simple good wish made for others; it is also more than a magical impress of personal thought and will upon others – it is the putting into action of

divine power transcending the individual thought and will of the one who is blessed as well as the one who is pronouncing the blessing. In other words it is an essentially sacerdotal act.

The Cabbala compares the role of prayer and benediction to a double movement, ascending and descending, similar to the circulation of the blood. The prayers of humanity rise towards God and, after having been divinely "oxidized", are transformed into benedictions which descend below from above. This is why one of the "acolytes" of the Card has his left hand raised and the other has his right hand lowered. The two blue columns behind "the Pope" symbolize in the first place this twofold current – rising and descending – of prayers and benedictions. At the same time "the Pope" himself holds aloft a triple cross on the side with the "column of prayer" and the praying acolyte, while his right hand – on the side with the "column of benediction" and the acolyte receiving (or "inspiring") benediction – makes the gesture of benediction.

The two "sides" of the Cabbala – the "right" side and the "left" side – and the two "columns" of the Sephiroth Tree, the pillar of Mercy and that of Severity, and similarly the two pillars of the temple of Solomon, J a c h i n and B o a z, correspond exactly to the two columns of prayer and benediction on this Card. Because it is Severity which stimulates prayer and it is Mercy which blesses. The venous "blue" blood of Boaz ascends and the arterial oxidized "red" blood of Jachin descends. The "red" blood bears the vivifying benediction of oxygen; the "blue" blood rids the organism of the severity of carbonic acid. It is the same in the spiritual life. Spiritual asphyxia menaces he who does not practice some form of prayer; he who practices it receives vivifying benediction in some form. The two "columns" therefore have an essentially practical significance – as practical spiritually as respiration is for the life of the organism.

Thus, the first practical teaching – for the Major Arcana of the Tarot are spiritual exercises – of the fifth Arcanum relates to spiritual respiration.

There are two kinds of respiration: horizontal respiration which takes place between "outside" and "inside", and vertical respiration which takes place between "above" and "below". The "sting of death" or the essential crisis of the supreme agony is the abrupt passage from horizontal to vertical respiration. Yet he who has learned vertical respiration while living will be spared from this "sting of death". For him the passage from the one form of respiration to the other will not be of the nature of a right angle but rather the arc of a circle: ⌟ ⌣ . The transition will not be abrupt but gradual, and curved instead of rectangular.

Now, the essence of vertical respiration is the alternation between prayer and benediction or grace. These two elements of vertical respiration manifest themselves in all domains of the inner life – mind, heart and will. Thus a relevant problem for the mind, which is not due to curiosity or intellectual collectionism, but rather to the thirst for truth, is fundamentally a prayer. And the illumination by which it may be followed is the corresponding benediction or grace. True suffering, also, is fundamentally always a prayer. And the consolation, peace and joy

which can follow are the effects of the benediction or grace corresponding to it.

True effort of the will, i.e. one hundred percent effort, true work, is also a prayer. When it is intellectual work, it is prayer: hallowed be thy name. When it is creative effort, it is prayer: thy kingdom come. When it is work with a view to supplying for the material needs of life, it is prayer: give us this day our daily bread. And all these forms of prayer in the language of work have their corresponding benedictions or graces.

The law of correspondence between the column of prayer (or problems, suffering, effort) and that of benediction (or illumination, consolation, fruits) is found expressed by the Master in the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. The nine (for there are nine, and not eight) beatitudes can thus be understood as the formula of vertical respiration. They teach it to us.

This respiration is the state of soul that the apostle Paul designated as "freedom in God". It is a new way of breathing. One freely breathes the divine breath, which is freedom.

> "The Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is f r e e d o m ".
> (II Corinthians iii,17)

The spiritual counterpart to horizontal respiration is the alternation from "extroversion" to "introversion" or from attention to the objective external life to the subjective inner life. The law of horizontal respiration is:- "Love your neighbor as yourself"-- There is the equilibrium between these two directions of attention.

With respect to vertical respiration, its law is: - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind". There is the relationship between prayer and benediction or grace.

There are three levels of horizontal respiration, just as there are three stages of vertical respiration.

The three levels of horizontal respiration are:

l o v e of N a t u r e,
l o v e of one's n e i g h b o r,
l o v e of the beings of the spiritual hierarchies (angels, etc.).

The three stages of vertical respiration are:

p u r i f i c a t i o n (by divine breath);
i l l u m i n a t i o n (by divine light);
m y s t i c a l u n i o n (in divine fire).

This is why "the Pope" holds aloft the triple cross. The triple cross has three crosspieces which divide the vertical line into three parts. It is the cross of complete and perfect spiritual respiration, horizontal and vertical: ⸸. It is the cross of triple love of neighbor (lower neighbor = Nature, equal neighbor = man, higher neighbor = beings of the hierarchies) and triple love of God (breath or faith, light or hope, fire or love).

It is the "scepter" of the Pope's authority for this Card, just as the sphere formed from the double cup and topped by the cross is the scepter of the Emperor. Just as the Emperor, guardian of the "throne of David", represents towards Heaven the human, i.e. the divine image and likeness in man, so does the Pope, guardian of the Portal to the Pillars of Benediction and Prayer, represent transcendental Divinity towards mankind.

The two posts, that of Emperor and that of Pope, are two spiritual realities. They are as real as the "head" and the "heart" are in the life of the individual. The heart is the center of respiration and blood circulation; the head is the center of the nervous system and is the seat of thought.

And just as no parliament will replace the spiritual reality of the post of Emperor — the "throne of David" cannot be replaced by collectivity - so will no ecumenical council replace the spiritual reality of the post of Pope or the "throne of Melchizadek, king of Plenitude (Salem)". Whether the "cannon shot" predicted in "esoteric circles of the Occident" be given or not, whether the sacerdotal throne remains visible or whether it be installed in the catacombs, it will certainly remain present for ever in the future history of humanity - despite what the prophets of its destruction may say.

Because history — as, moreover the life of the individual — is worked by day and by night. It has a diurnal aspect and a nocturnal aspect. The former is exoteric, while the latter is esoteric. The silence and obscurity of the night is always full of events in preparation — and all that which is "unconscious" or "superconscious" in the human being belongs to the domain of "night". This is the magical side of history, the side of magical deeds and works acting behind the facade of history "by day". Thus, when the Gospel was preached by the light of day in the countries around the Mediterranean, the nocturnal rays of the Gospel effected a profound transformation of Buddhism. There, the ideal of individual liberation by entering the state of Nirvana gave way to the ideal of renouncing Nirvana for the work of mercy towards suffering humanity. The ideal of Mahayana, the Great Chariot, then had its resplendent ascent to the heaven of Asia's moral values.

"Day to day pours forth speech (אֹמֶר - ' O m e r)
Night to night declares knowledge (דַּעַת - D a ' a t h)
(Psalm xix, 1; the Vulgate gives here for the corresponding Psalm the Latin text:
"Dies diei eructat v e r b u m
et nox nocti indicat scientiam")

This is the formula of the twofold teaching — by the speech of day and by the knowledge of night; of the twofold tradition — by verbal teaching and by direct inspiration; of twofold magic — by the spoken word and by silent radiation; and, lastly, of twofold history - "visible" history by day and "invisible" history by night.

Now, the posts of Emperor and Pope are realities beyond as well as on this side of the threshold which separates "day" and "night". And the "Pope" of the fifth Card is the guardian of this threshold. He is seated between the two pillars — the pillar of day or prayer and the pillar of night or benediction.

"The Emperor" of the fourth Card is the Master of the "day" and the Guardian of the Blood or quintessence of the nocturnal reality of the day. "The Pope" is the guardian of Respiration or of the reality of the relationship between day and night. That which he guards is the equilibrium between day and night, between human

effort and divine grace. His post is founded on primordial cosmic deeds.

"God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness night." (Genesis i,5)

says the first book of Moses. And the act of separation of the intelligible from the mysterious signifies at the same time the establishing of cosmic respiration, which is the analogy of "the Spirit of God moving above the face of the waters". For the divine breath (r u a c h 'e l o h i m) above the profoundness of peace ("the waters" – it is this which is the psychological as well as the cosmic reality of Nirvana) is the divine prototype of respiration. Therefore the "Great Chariot", the "Mahayana" of Buddhism, raises itself towards the divine breath — the Mercy which moves above the waters of the pre-cosmic peace of Nirvana, while the "Little Chariot", the Hinayana, aspires towards the end of respiration; its aim is to be drowned in the waters of peace – to enter into Nirvana where there is no movement – neither change nor respiration.

But the divine Breath (ruach 'elohim) is above the ocean of peace of Nirvana; the divine Breath moves it. And to renounce Nirvana, after having arrived at its threshold, means to say: rise above Nirvana and participate in the divine Breath transcending it.

Now, primordial water penetrated by divine breath is the essence of B l o o d; breath reflected by the water is L i g h t; the rhythmic alternation from absorption of the breath by water to its reflection by it is R e s p i r a t i o n. Light is the Day, Blood is the Night, and Respiration is Plenitude (Salem). MELCHIZADEK, king of S a l e m, Priest of the Most High God (k o h e n l e'e l 'e l y o n -- כֹּהֵן לְאֵל עֶלְיוֹן) is therefore appointed to Plenitude, to Respiration, while the Anointed King, guardian of the "throne of David", or the Emperor, is appointed to the Day. Although he is appointed to the Day, he is anointed by the Night and he owes his authority to the Night, whose mysterious presence during the Day – the Blood – he guards.

Dear Unknown Friend, you will probably ask yourself if there is a third post, a post for he who is appointed to the Night?

Yes, the post of Master of the Night (he is also named "Lord of the Night") exists. We shall approach the various ideas relating to this post in Letter IX dedicated to the IXth Arcanum of the Tarot.

It suffices to indicate here that in Israel there were three higher posts – the posts of k i n g, high p r i e s t and p r o p h e t. This is also the place to remark that it is a matter of posts, and not of persons; a single person can sometimes occupy two or even three posts.

But let us return to the post of the Pope, which is the subject of the Vth Arcanum of the Tarot. It relates to spiritual Respiration, as we have seen. This is why the Pope represents another category of truth and another criterion of truth than the scientific truth and criterion. For him "true" is that which comprises harmonious respiration; "false" is that which upsets the harmony of spiritual respiration. Thus, the heliocentric system of modern astronomical science is "true" from the point of view of phenomena, but

it is at the same time fundamentally "false" from the viewpoint of spiritual Respiration. The Blood that issued from Christ onto the earth is precious to such a degree that he gave the Earth the central position in the space of noumenal values. The geocentric cosmos is therefore true from the point of view of Respiration, i.e. from the point of view of the life of prayer and benediction. And the heliocentric cosmos, although it has the support of all the facts of the phenomenal world, is false because it fails to recognize that which is truly central – the Incarnation of the Word – and replaces it by a center situated more at the periphery, removed from the central value. The sun is only a center in phenomenal space, and one commits the sin of idolatry in attributing to it the central role which belongs to the sanctified Earth – sanctified, and thus rendered central, by the Incarnation of the Word.

Here is another example, this time from the domain of esoteric experience:++

As we have already mentioned, reincarnation – successive lives of the same human individuality – is a fact of experience, as are the successive periods of wakefulness belonging to the day, which are interrupted by sleep at night. Buddha recognized the fact of reincarnation as such, but he considered it regrettable. This is why the aim of the eightfold path which he taught is to put an end to reincarnation. Because Nirvana is the end of successive terrestrial lives.

Thus Buddha recognized and at the same time denied the fact of reincarnation. He recognized it as fact and he denied it as ideal. Because facts are transitory; they come and go. There was a time when there was no reincarnation; there will be a time when it will no longer be. Reincarnation commenced only after the Fall and it will cease with Reintegration. It is therefore not eternal, and therefore it is not an ideal.

There are therefore two truths: the one is actual or temporal and the other ideal or eternal. The first is founded on the logic of facts; the other – on moral logic. Now, Psalm 85 designates actual truth אֱמֶת (emeth) by the word truth (veritas) and truth based on moral logic – חֶסֶד (chesed) by the word mercy (misericordia). The Psalm says:

> "Mercy (chesed) and Truth (emeth) will meet;
> Justice (tzedek) and Peace (schalom) will embrace each other.
> Truth (emeth) will spring up from the ground (me'eretz).
> And Justice (tzedek) will look down from the heavens (mischamayim)."
> (Psalm 85, 10-11)

Here is the problem of "double truth" in its entirety – and here is the moving prophecy that the two truths, the factual and the moral, will at some time meet and that their revelation in man – justice (tzedek) and peace (schalom) – will embrace each other! But they will meet only slowly and, given the actual state of affairs, they often still contradict one another, at least in appearance. This is why St. Paul had to say that "the wisdom of this world is folly with God" (I Corinthians iii, 19). And this is why also divine wisdom is often folly before this world...

Now, the Pope being the guardian of spiritual respiration (and the letter ה, Hé, the

fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, has breath as its primitive hieroglyph!), is the representative of moral logic.

Benediction and Prayer are the two pillars between which he is seated. It is only that which is ideal which is true for him. Here is why, for him, marriage is indissoluble – though there may be thousands of matrimonial catastrophes; here is why confession and repentance efface every sin – though thousands of tribunals only punish the guilty, whether they repent or not; here is why the Church is guided by the Holy Spirit – though it practiced or tolerated the practice of the Inquisition for centuries; and here is why a single life on earth suffices for eternal salvation – although souls reincarnate.

Thus, the Pope is always at the middle of a conflict between ideal truth and actual truth, between Mercy (chesed) and Truth (emeth). And this conflict is a wound – namely the fifth wound, the wound of the heart. For if the Emperor has four wounds, the Pope has five.

If you are acquainted, dear Unknown Friend, with the symbolism of the Cabbala, you know that the wound spoken of here is due to the opposition between the fourth Sephirah, C H E S E D, Mercy, and the fifth Sephirah, G E B U R A H, Severity, on the Tree of the Sephiroth – and that this wound refers to the sixth Sephirah, T I P H E R E T H, Beauty or Harmony, which is the synthesis of the two preceding Sephiroth.

If, moreover, you occupy yourself with Christian Esotericism, you will comprehend that the wound in question is that of the S a c r e d H e a r t, caused externally by "one of the soldiers (who) pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (John xix, 34). And you will understand also that it is Mercy and Truth (Chesed and Emeth) that came out as blood and water. This is why the Evangelist emphasizes the symbolic reality or the real symbolism of the fact that the blood and water that came out of the wound were not mixed and that it is in this fact that the spiritual sense of the wound is found expressed. The wound is caused spiritually by the conflict between mercy and truth, between ideal truth and actual truth, which are not united....

And the Evangelist goes on to say: "He who saw it has borne witness – his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth – that you may also believe" (John xix, 35). He has therefore seen the fact, and he knows what he wants to say as a symbol of the spiritual reality of the wound.

But now we are in the realm of the Esotericism of the Five Wounds, the Flaming Star, the Pentagram, the quinternary or the number five.....

L.C. de SAINT-MARTIN says that "As long as numbers are united and bound up with the decad, there is not one that presents the image of corruption or deformity. It is only when one separates them that these characteristics manifest themselves. Among the numbers thus specified, some are absolutely evil, such as 2 and 5. These are also the only ones which divide the number ten." (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Des nombres", Nice, 1946, xxi)

According to Saint-MARTIN, the quinternary (with respect to the binary, we refer

you to LETTER II, where you may find a discussion of the statement of Saint-Martin concerning the evil nature of the number Two) is therefore absolutely evil when it is not united and bound up with the decad. Thus, he says, --

> "the forms of animals must also be such as to serve as receptacles for the torments of the quinternaries, torments that we ourselves exert against them in imitation of these same quinternaries." (Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, "Des nombres", Nice, 1946, xxxi)

Eliphas LÉVI says, however, that:-- "The Pentagram signifies the domination of the mind over the (4) elements; and the demons of air, the spirits of fire, the phantoms of water and ghosts of earth are enchained by this sign. Equipped therewith, and suitably disposed you may behold the infinite through the medium of that faculty which is like the soul's eye, and you will be ministered unto by legions of angels and hosts of fiends" -- Then -: "The empire of will over the astral light, which is the physical soul of the four elements, is represented in magic by the pentagram, placed at the head of this chapter" -- And further still :- "On 24 July in the year 1854, the author of this book, Eliphas Lévi, made an experiment of evocation with the Pentagram, after due preparation according to the ceremonies indicated in the thirteenth chapter of the Ritual" - And lastly -- "We must remark, however, that the use of the Pentagram is most dangerous for operators who are not in possession of its complete and perfect understanding. The direction of the points of the star is in no sense arbitrary, and may change the entire character of an operation, as we shall explain in the Ritual" (Eliphas Lévi, "Dogme et rituel de la haute magie"; trsl. A.E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual", London, 1968, pp. 63, 67, 69)

In chapter five of "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual" we find the following summary of Eliphas LÉVI's doctrine concerning the pentagram :-

> "The Pentagram, which in Gnostic schools is called the Blazing Star, is <u>the sign of intellectual omnipotence and aristocracy</u>." (ibid., trsl. p. 237)

But in "The Key of the Mysteries" Eliphas LÉVI says :-

> "The quinary (or quinternary) is the number of religion, for it is the number of God united to that of woman." (Eliphas Lévi, "The Key of the Mysteries", trsl. A. Crowley, London, 1969, p. 30)

And much later still, in his posthumous work "Le Grand Arcane ou l'Occultisme Dévoilé" ("The Great Arcanum, or Occultism Unveiled") Eliphas LÉVI writes :-

> "The ancient rites have lost their effectiveness since Christianity appeared in the world.
>
> The Christian and Catholic religion, in fact, is the legitimate daughter of of Jesus, king of the Mages.
>
> A simple scapular worn by a truly religious person is a more invincible talisman than the ring and pentacle of Solomon.
>
> The Mass is the most prodigious of evocations. Necromancers evoke the dead, the sorceror evokes the devil and he shakes, but the Catholic priest does

not tremble in evoking the living God.

Catholics alone have priests because they alone have the altar and the offering, i.e. the whole of religion.

To practice high Magic is to compete with the Catholic priesthood; it is to be a dissident priest. Rome is the great Thebes of the new initiation. It has crypts for its catacombs; for talismen, its rosaries and medallions; for a magic chain, its congregations; for magnetic fires, its convents; for centers of attraction, its confessionals; for means of expansion, its pulpits and the addresses of its bishops; it has, lastly, its Pope, the Man-God rendered visible." (Eliphas Lévi, "Le Grand Arcane ou l'Occultisme dévoilé", Paris, 1921, pp. 67-68, 83-84)

And we conclude by citing Joséphin PÉLADAN, who declared himself in agreement with the preceding:--

"The Eucharist is the whole of Christianity; and through it Christianity has become living magic.

Since Jesus, there are still sorcerors, (but) there are no mages."
(Joséphin Péladan, "L'occulte catholique", Paris, 1898, p. 312)

Well, after all these quotations, where are we now?

We have arrived at a very serious problem: that of the pentagram or <u>evil quinternary</u> and the Pentagram or <u>good quinternary</u>.

Because according to Saint-MARTIN — whose clear presentation of the problem lends itself better than any other in serving as a point of departure — the quinternary is <u>good</u> "as long as it is united and bound to the decad" and it is "absolutely <u>evil</u>" when it is separated and isolated from it. In other words, the pentagram as the sign of <u>intellectual autocracy</u>, i.e. the emancipated human personality, is <u>good</u> when it is the expression of the personality whose will is united and bound to the fullness of the manifestation of Unity, i.e. the decad; and it is <u>evil</u> when it expresses the will of the personality separated from this Unity. Or, in other words again, the sign is good when it expresses the formula: F i a t v o l u n t a s T u a ("Thy will be done"); and it is evil when the formula of the underlying will is: F i a t v o l u n t a s m e a ("my will be done"). Here is the moral and practical meaning of Saint-MARTIN's statement.

With regard to the statements of Eliphas LÉVI and Joséphin PÉLADAN that we have quoted, they add their conviction that it is the Universal or Catholic Church which represents for humanity the decad or fullness of manifested unity. For them, the will united and bound to the essence of the Church is expressed by the good pentagram, understood in the sense of Saint-Martin, and the will that is purely and simply personal is expressed by the evil pentagram. This is why Madame BLAVATSKY accused Eliphas LÉVI of Jesuit politics and why Joséphin Péladan's old occultist-friends regretted his relapse into Roman sectarianism.

But now, it is not a question of taking sides in the "war of the two roses", nor of

accusing or regretting. Here it is a matter of the problem of personal arbitrary magic (the quinternary separated from the decad) and personal sacred magic (the quinternary united and bound to the decad). And this is the t h e s i s that I put forward with regard to this problem, a thesis which is the fruit of 43 years of experience in the esoteric domain:-

It is only the pentagram of the five wounds which is the effective sign of personal sacred magic, while the pentagram of the five currents of personal will, no matter how the points of this pentagram are turned, is the effective sign for the imposition of the personal will of the operator on beings weaker than him — it is always a fundamentally tyrannic act.

This is the t h e s i s. Let us now proceed to its explanation.

A magical act presupposes an effect surpassing the normal power of the operator. This surplus of power may be furnished by forces which are obedient to the operator, or by forces borrowed by him, or, lastly, by forces acting through the operator and which he obeys.

In the case of forces which are supplied to the operator by submission it is a matter of the operation of magic that we have designated (in Letter III) as "personal or arbitrary", i.e. an operation whose source of initiative, whose means and aim are found exclusively in the will and understanding of the personality of the operator. Such an operation can only make use of forces lower than the operator. For one does not command angels. The operator here is alone and acts as a magical technician under his own responsibility and at his own risk and peril. One could also designate this type of magic as "Faustian".

In the case of forces borrowed by the operator, it is a matter of an act of collective magic. It is the "magic chain" which renders the operator more powerful; it "lends" him the forces which he then makes use of for the operation. In this case the operator is aided by forces which are equal to him (and are not lower than him as in the case of "Faustian" magic). The power and effect depend here on the number of people belonging to the "chain". One could designate this type of magic as "collective".

Lastly, in the case of forces acting through the operator as intermediary and which he obeys, it is also a matter of a "chain", but a v e r t i c a l and qualitative (hierarchical) chain instead of a horizontal and quantitative chain, which latter is the case with "collective" magic. The operator here is alone in the horizontal sense, but he is not in the vertical sense: above him beings higher than him act with him and through him. This type of magic presupposes the fact of being in conscious relationship with higher spiritual beings, i.e. it assumes prior mystical and gnostic experience. We have designated this type of magic (in Letter III) as "sacred Magic", because the forces active in operations of this magic are superior to the operator. However, its historical name is "theurgy".

The formulas expressing the fundamental attitude of the personal will corresponding to the three types of magic described above are:

F i a t v o l u n t a s m e a (Faustian magic);
F i a t v o l u n t a s n o s t r a (collective magic);
F i a t v o l u n t a s T U A (sacred magic).

The first two forms of magic - Faustian and collective - make use of the method of

which the pentagram of the five currents of personal and collective will is the sign. They are based on the principle that the strong dominates the weak. It is a matter here of the power of compulsion.

With respect to the third form of magic — sacred magic — the method it makes use of is not the force of the will, but rather its purity. But the will as such is never entirely pure — for it is not the "flesh" which bears the stigmata of original sin, nor thought as such, but rather the will — it is necessary that the five dark currents inherent in the human will, i.e. the desire to be great, to take, to keep, to advance and to hold on to at the expense of others — are paralyzed or "nailed". The five wounds are therefore the five vacuities which result in the five currents of the will. And these vacuities are filled by will from above, i.e. by absolutely pure will.

This is the principle of the magic of the pentagram of 5 wounds.

Before proceeding to the question of the way in which the five wounds of the will are produced and what the concrete practical method of the magic of the pentagram of five wounds is, it is necessary rather that we ponder on the concept itself of "the wound".

A "wound" is a door through which the objective exterior world intrudes into the interior of the closed system of the subjective interior world. Speaking biologically, it is a breach in the walls of the fortress of the organism by which forces from outside the organism penetrate into its interior. A simple lesion of the skin, for example, signifies such a breach and for a certain time gives the air (and all that which is borne by the air) access into an interior region of the organism which would be barred to it if the skin were intact.

Now, the organ of sight, the eye, in comparison with the surface of the human body covered over with skin, is a wound which can be covered by mobile skin — the eyelids. Through this wound the objective outer world penetrates into our inner life with that much greater intensity, corresponding to the degree that sight reveals more of the outer world than the sense of touch. With the eyelids closed, the place where the experience of the world named "sight" takes place becomes again that reduced experience of the world — yet normal for the entire surface of the body — that we designate as "touch".

The eyes are open wounds which are so sensitive that they suffer with (i.e. react to) every nuance of light and color. And it is the same with the other sense organs. They are wounds, i.e. it is they which impose on us the objective reality of the outer world. There where I would like to see beautiful flowers, my eyes make me see a pile of dung. I am forced to see what the objective world shows me by way of my eyes. It is like a nail from outside nailing my will.

The senses — given that they are sound and functioning normally — are wounds through which the objective world, without regard to our will, imposes itself on us.

But the senses are organs of perception, not of action. Imagine that the five organs of action — the limbs, including the head in its function as a limb — were to have analogous wounds, i.e. that the five currents of will of which they are an expression were to give access to an objective will which would be to personal desires what sense perceptions are to

the play of fantasy.

This is the esoteric concept of the wound. And this concept can become a spiritual reality, then psychic, and eventually even physical with some people. The stigmatics - from Saint Francis of ASSISI to Padre Pio in Italy and Teresa NEUMANN in Germany during the present epoch — are people for whom the reality of the five wounds has reached to the physical plane. These are the <u>future organs</u> of the will in formation, the organs of action which taken together have the sacred pentagram as their sign — the quinternary united and bound to the fullness of the decad, according to Saint-Martin.

It is still necessary to specify the five wounds corresponding to the five dark currents of the will — the desire for personal greatness, to take, to keep, to advance and to hold onto at the expense of others -- which correspond, in their turn, to the five limbs (including the head as a limb), although only four are allocated to the corresponding limbs. The desire to take or get hold of things is bound to the right hand; similarly, the desire to retain or keep belongs to the left hand; likewise, the desire to advance at the expense of others and the desire to hold onto at the expense of others correspond to the right foot and the left foot respectively; but it is not the case concerning the desire for personal greatness that it corresponds to the head. The head does not bear the fifth wound, for two reasons: firstly, because it bears the "crown of thorns" (to which we endeavored to give an explanation in Letter IV), which is born, in principle, by every person capable of <u>objective</u> thought — the "crown of thorns" being given to the human being since the beginning of human history. It is that subtle organ which is designated for us in the Occident as the "<u>eight-petalled lotus</u>", and which is designated in India as the "<u>thousand-petalled lotus</u>" or Sahasrara (crown center). This crown center is a "natural gift", as it were, to each human being and every normal person possesses it. The "thorns" of the crown center function as the "nails" of objectivity, which give conscience (in the sense of the French word "conscience" or the German word "Gewissen", or "sovest" in Russian) to thought. It is thanks to them that thought has not become wholly emancipated and as arbitrary, for example, as the imagination is. Thought <u>as such</u> is, in spite of all, the organ of truth, not of illusion.

Thus, it is not thought as such which allows the desire for personal greatness or the tendency towards megalomania, but rather <u>the will</u> which makes use of the head and which can take hold of thought and reduce it to the role of its instrument. And this constitutes the second reason as to why the fifth wound — that of <u>organic</u> humility, replacing the current of the will-to-greatness — is not found in the head, but rather in the <u>heart</u>, i.e. it reaches the heart, penetrating from the right-hand side. Because it is there that the will-to-greatness has its origin and it is there from whence it takes hold of the head and makes it its instrument. This is why many thinkers and scientists want to think "without the heart" in order to be objective — which is an illusion, because one can in no way think without the heart, the heart being the <u>activating</u> principle of thought; what one can do is to think with a humble and warm heart instead of with a pretentious and cold heart.

Thus, the fifth wound (which is the <u>first</u> in so far as its importance is concerned) is

that of the h e a r t instead of the head, the head being From the point of view of the active will an instrument or "limb" of the heart.

Let us now turn to the question concerning the origin of the five wounds, i.e. how they are produced, and to the concrete practical method of the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds.

How does one acquire the five wounds?

There exists only one single method, one sole means leading to this. And - no matter whether in full knowledge or whether instinctively - every esotericist, every mystic, every idealist, every spiritual-seeker and, lastly, every man of good will makes use of it, in Europe as in Asia, today as twenty centuries ago. This universal method of all ages and all cultures is nothing other than the practice of the traditional t h r e e v o w s, namely obedience, poverty and chastity.

Obedience rivets the will-to-greatness of the heart; poverty holds fast the desire to take and the desire to keep of the right hand and the left hand; chastity pins down the desires of the Nimrodic "hunter" - to advance and to hold onto at the expense of others or, in other words, to hunt and to trap game - of the right foot and the left foot.

The vow of obedience is the practice of silencing personal desires, emotions and imagination in the face of reason and conscience; it is the primacy of the ideal as opposed to the apparent, the nation as opposed to the personal, humanity as opposed to the nation, and God as opposed to humanity. It is the life of cosmic and human hierarchical ordering: it is the meaning and justification of the fact that there are Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; Dominions, Virtues, Powers; Principalities, Archangels, Angels; Priests, Knights and Commoners. Obedience is order: it is international law; it is the state; it is the Church; it is universal peace. True obedience is the very opposite of tyranny and slavery, since its root is the love which issues from faith and confidence. That which is above serves that which is below and that which is below obeys that which is above. Obedience is the practical conclusion to that which one recognizes as the existence of something higher than oneself. Whosoever recognizes G o d, obeys.

Such obedience as is practiced in religious orders and the Catholic spiritual knighthood is a form of training - moreover, very effective - of the will, with a view to rivetting the will-to-greatness. The obedience that the chela has to his guru in India and Tibet follows, in principle, the same aim. This is true also of the absolute obedience that the hassidim have towards the tzadekim in the Jewish Hassidic communities, and similarly it is so with the obedience without reserve on the part of the disciples of the Startzy (spiritual Masters) in orthodox, pre-Bolshevist Russia.

The universal formula of obedience is: Fiat voluntas tua.

The vow of p o v e r t y is the practice of inner emptiness, which is established as a

consequence of the silence of personal desires, emotions and imagination so that the soul is capable of receiving from above the revelation of the word, the life and the light. Poverty is perpetual active vigil and expectation before the eternal sources of creativity; it is the soul awaiting that which is new and unexpected; it is the aptitude for learning always and everywhere; it is the "conditio sine qua non" of all illumination, all revelation and all initiation.

The following is a short story which makes evident in a wonderful way the practical spiritual meaning of poverty.

Once upon a time four brothers went on a journey in order to seek the greatest treasure. After a week of travelling they arrived at a mountain of iron ore. "A whole mountain of iron ore!" cried one of the four. "Here is the treasure we have been seeking!" - But the three others said:- "This is not the greatest treasure," and continued their walk, while their brother remained by the mountain of iron ore. He was now rich and they were as poor as before. One month later they arrived at a field strewn with greenish and yellowish stones. "This is copper!" cried one of the three brothers. "This is certainly the treasure that we are seeking!" But the two other brothers did not share his opinion. Thus, he remained there, being the rich proprietor of a copper mine, while the two others continued on their way as poor as they were before.

After a year they arrived at a valley full of stones shining with a whitish light. "Silver!" cried one of the two brothers. "This is at last the treasure that we are seeking!" But the other brother shook his head and continued on his way, while his brother remained there as the rich proprietor of a silver mine.

Seven years later he arrived at a stony place in an arid desert. He sat down, being half-dead with fatigue. It was then that he noticed that the pebbles under his feet were gleaming. It was g o l d.

The vow of c h a s t i t y means to say the putting into practice of the resolution to live according to solar law, without covetousness and without indifference. Because virtue is boring and vice is disgusting. But that which lives at the foundation of the heart is neither boring nor disgusting. The foundation of the heart is l o v e. The heart lives only when it loves. It is then like the sun. And chastity is the state of the human being in which the heart, having become solar, is the center of gravity.

In other words, chastity is the state of the human being where the centre named in occidental esotericism as the "twelve-petalled lotus" (Anāhata in Indian esotericism) is awakened and becomes the sun of the microcosmic "planetary system". The three lotus centers situated below it (the ten-petalled, the six-petalled and the four-petalled) begin then to function in conformity with the life of the heart (the twelve-petalled lotus), i.e. "according to solar law". When they do this, the person is chaste, no matter whether he or she is celibate or married. Thus there are virgins

who are married and mothers of children, and there are physical virgins who are not so in reality. The ideal of the Virgin-Mother that the traditional Church (Catholic and Orthodox) puts forward is truly worthy of reverence. It is the ideal of chastity which triumphs over sterility and indifference.

The practice of chastity does not concern solely the domain of sex. It bears equally on all other domains where there is a choice between solar law and all sorts of dulling intoxications. Thus, for example, all fanaticism sins against chastity, because there one is carried away by a dark current. The French revolution was an orgy of perverse collective intoxication, just as the revolution in Russia was. Nationalism – such as in the Germany of Hitler – is likewise a form of intoxication drowning the conscience of the heart and is therefore incompatible with the ideal of chastity.

There are also forms of practical occultism which lend themselves to the pursuit of an unhealthy intoxication. Thus Joséphin PÉLADAN acknowledged:-

> "I do not conceal it; we have all at first been seduced by the aesthetic of occultism, and infatuated with the quaint and the strange; one has subscribed to the amusements of nervous females; one has sought thrills – the thrill of the invisible and of the beyond; one has asked for the excitement of the incorporeal." (Joséphin Péladan, "L'occulte catholique", Book III, chap. II, "L'occulte du fils ou Théurgie"; Paris, 1898, p.309)

The practice of chastity holds fast the leanings of the <u>hunter</u> in the human being, of which the male side is inclined to pursue game and the female side to set traps. The practice of poverty binds the tendencies of the <u>thief</u> in the human being, where the male side is inclined to seize and the female side to keep indefinitely, instead of waiting for the free gift or the merited fruit of work. The practice of obedience, lastly, rivets the will-to-greatness or the inclinations of the <u>usurper</u> in human nature, whose male side is inclined to estimate itself great in its own eyes and whose female side seeks to make itself estimated so in the eyes of others.

These three "v o w s" therefore constitute the sole known and indispensable method which leads to the "five w o u n d s", i.e. to the effective pentagram of Sacred Magic. It is still necessary to specify that it is not a matter of the <u>virtues</u> of humility, poverty and chastity being wholly realized – because no man in the flesh can possess these virtues totally – but rather of their p r a c t i c e, i.e. sincere efforts aimed at their realization. It is the effort which counts.

Such is the answer to the question: How does one acquire the five wounds? Now follows the response to the question: How does the magic of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds operate?

As we have indicated above, it is the <u>purity</u> of the will and not its force which constitutes the basis of the magic of the sacred pentagram of 5 wounds. In this it corresponds to divine magic, which does not force but establishes (or re-establishes)

freedom of choice through the presence of the true, the beautiful and the good. Now, it is a matter in the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds of accomplishing the living presence of the good alongside the consciousness of the subject of the operation. For good does not fight evil; it does not struggle against it - the good is only present, or it is not. Its victory consists in that it results in being present, its defeat in that it is forced to be absent. And it is the five wounds which assure the presence of the good, i.e. the presence of p u r e will from above.

The following is an episode which is found in the "Considerations on the Stigmata of Saint Francis" (Fifth Consideration) and which is well suited to serve as a key to the problem with which we are occupied.

A Franciscan friar prayed for eight years following the death of Saint Francis that the secret words which the Seraphim had spoken to saint Francis when he gave him the stigmata would be revealed to him. Now, one day saint Francis appeared to him and to seven other friars and, turning towards this friar, spoke to him thus:

> "Know, dearest friar, that when I was on the mount of Alverna, all rapt in the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, in this Seraphic vision I was by Christ thus stigmatized in my body; and then Christ said to me:- "Knowest thou what I have done to thee? I have given thee the marks of my Passion in order that thou mayst be My standard-bearer. And even as I, on the day of My death, descended into Limbo and drew thence all the souls I found therein, by virtue of my Stigmatas, and led them up to paradise, so do I grant to thee from this hour (that thou mayst be conformed to Me in thy death as thou hast been in thy life) that after thou hast passed from this life thou shalt go every year, on the day of thy death, to purgatory, and shalt deliver all the souls thou shalt find there of thy three Orders, to wit, Minors, Sisters and Penitents, and likewise the souls of thy devoted followers, and this, in virtue of thy Stigmatas that I have given thee; and thou shalt lead them to paradise. "And those words I told not while I lived in the world."
> ("Considerations on the Glorious Stigmata of St. Francis" in "The Little Flowers of Saint Francis", book ii, ch. 9; trsl. T. Okey, London, 1963, pp. 129-130)

This said, saint Francis suddenly disappeared. Numerous friars subsequently heard this narrative from the lips of the eight friars who were present at this vision and revelation of saint Francis. And "Frater Jacobus Blancus lector Romanus praedicavit hoc et dixit se audisse ab uno fratre de supradictis octo" ("Brother Jacobus Blancus, lector Romanus, proclaimed this and said that he had heard it from one of the above-named eight") adds the manuscript of Saint-Isidore (discussed by Paul SABATIER) at the end of the narrative.

Let us now analyze the narrative from the point of view of the magic of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds.

It may be noticed first of all that the Stigmata given to saint Francis are of a spiritual as well as a corporeal nature, for their virtue (i.e. their magical power) continues after his death. Also, here it is indicated that the virtue of the Stigmata of

saint Francis, as well as those of Christ himself, is revealed in that he is able to lead back souls from Limbo and purgatory and conduct them to paradise. Let us mention, lastly, that the narrative is quite categorical concerning the statement that it is only by virtue of his Stigmata that Jesus Christ prior to his resurrection led souls out of Limbo and conducted them to paradise, and similarly it is only by virtue of his Stigmata that saint Francis, also, withdraws from purgatory each year on the day of his death all souls who are bound to him by a spiritual tie and leads them to paradise.

Take the terms "Limbo", "purgatory" and "paradise" in their meaning as understood by analogy and you have a clear and precise formula for the working of the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds: it effects a change from the natural state ("Limbo") and from the state of human suffering ("purgatory") to that of the blessedness of the divine state ("Paradise"). The operation of the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds therefore consists in transforming the natural state into the human state and this latter into the divine state. This is the work of spiritual Alchemy of the transformation from Nature ("Limbo"), and from the Human ("Purgatory"), into the Divine ("Paradise"), according to the traditional threefold division - Nature, Man and God.

Let us now consider more closely the <u>practical</u> meaning of the terms "Limbo", "purgatory" and "paradise", in so far as they are stages in the work of transmutation - or <u>liberation</u> - of the magic of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds.

Their <u>practical</u> meaning is not spatial, i.e. referring to "places", but refers rather to <u>states</u> of the human being - in body, soul and spirit. When we understand it thus, we shall readily discover that the three states are known to us through experience and that experience supplies us with the <u>keys of analogy</u> to be able to understand the ideas of "Limbo", "purgatory" and "paradise" as such, i.e. on all planes and at every level - psychological, metaphysical and theological - of their application.

Each of us has had the experience of a harmonious state of good health accompanied by a carefree state of soul and calmness of spirit. It is what one calls "joie de vivre", pure and simple. If there were no serious illnesses, sorrows and problems, this would be permanently our natural state. It is what <u>Nature</u>, in so far as it is virgin and unfallen, offers us, which we could enjoy constantly if there were no fallen elements in Nature - no sickness and sin, no sorrow, fear and remorse in ourselves - and if, above all, life as a whole was not the field which death reaps unceasingly. But we have nevertheless from time to time moments, hours, perhaps even whole days, of the experience of the natural joie de vivre, without sorrows or cares. And this experience supplies us with the key of analogy for understanding what the meaning of Limbo is. Limbo is the natural state of physical and psychic health that Nature - outside and within ourselves - can offer us from itself without the assistance of supernatural or divine grace. Limbo is the virginal part of Nature (human nature and outer Nature) according to the traditional doctrine "natura vulnerata non deleta" ("Nature is wounded but not destroyed"). Those who know the BHAGAVAD-GITA, or who have occupied themselves at all with the Hindu tradition, will easily

recognize in the state designated by the term "Limbo" the state or "guna" of Nature (Prakriti) that is called Sattva in India (the other two "gunas" being called tamas and rajas).

Concerning the experience relating to "purgatory", it comprises all purging - suffering - physical, psychic and spiritual. It is corporeal, moral and intellectual suffering which is our intermediate state between the experience of the natural innocence of Limbo and the moments of heavenly joy when the rays of paradise reach us.

We already experience here below a foretaste of purgatory and of paradise. We suffer and the consolations of Heaven are given us. Human life is natural innocent joy, and its ruin is through sin; what ensues is suffering and it is the rays of benediction from Heaven which console us. This is our life. It consists of experiencing the <u>reality</u> of Limbo, purgatory and paradise.

Now, the magic of the sacred pentagram of five wounds "leads souls out of Limbo and purgatory and conducts them to paradise". This means to say that it makes Heaven present in "Limbo" and "purgatory", that it enables it to descend into the domain of innocent and suffering nature. This, in turn, means to say that it introduces the supernatural into the natural, heals sickness, illumines consciousness and enables participation in the spiritual life. "Purgatory" includes <u>all</u> sickness and <u>all</u> suffering. "To be led out of it" signifies liberation from it, i.e. to be healed, illumined and reunited with the spirit.

The magic of the five wounds operates by the <u>presence</u> of the reality of the superhuman spiritual world by means of the wounds, and accomplishes the transmutation from the states of "Limbo" and "purgatory" to the state of union with the Divine, or "paradise". Concerning the ritual or "technical" side of the magic of the sacred pentagram with five wounds, this is to be found outlined in the third Letter, relating to the Arcanum "The Empress".

The quinternary "united and bound to the decad" of which Saint-MARTIN speaks is therefore the quinternary or pentagram of five wounds. The other quinternary, qualified by Saint-Martin as "absolutely evil", is separated from the <u>decad</u>, i.e. from the five currents (or "members") of the human will, endowed with five wounds from the divine will. (The five currents of the human will endowed with five wounds also correspond to the letters YHShVH of the name: יהשוה - I H S C H U H, Jesus - as is accepted symbolically by KHUNRATH, KIRCHER, SAINT-MARTIN and others, although in Hebrew the name of Jesus is written: ישוע).

But I shall not say, as radically as Saint-Martin does, that the quinternary separated from the decad is absolutely evil. It is, rather, <u>arbitrary</u> - and it is evil only in so far as the human personality emancipated from the Divine and from Nature is evil.

In any case the pentagram, other than that of the five wounds, is not the sign of "black magic", but rather that of arbitrary magic, or "grey magic", if you wish.

Because it is the sign of the power of the personality as such – which is inevitably a mixture of good and evil, even when it acts with the best intentions in the world. Oswald WIRTH says concerning this:

> " Common Magic deceives itself about the power of this sign, which by itself confers no power. The individual will is powerful only in the measure to which it is in harmony with a more general power .... Let us not seek to develop the Will artificially and to transform ourselves into athletes of the will ... "
> (Oswald Wirth, "Le Tarot des imagiers du moyen âge ", Paris, 1927, p. 123)

Regarding the two forms of the pentagram – with the point above and with the point below – they do not in any way correspond to the division of magic into "white Magic" and "black magic" (although the traditional masters – Eliphas LÉVI, for example – teach this). You can certainly draw the head of a goat (as Eliphas Lévi does) in the "reversed pentagram"; it does not become through this the sign of black magic. The two forms of the pentagram refer to human electricity (i.e. the electricity of the human organism accompanying the movements of the will) – of the head and of the legs, which has nothing to do with horns. It is the same electricity in both cases, with the sole difference that in the case of the pentagram with the point turned above it is the will of the intellect which moves the electrical currents, while in the case of the pentagram with the point turned below, it is the intelligence of the will which does so. The two poles of the will can equally serve good or evil – although in fact both represent a mixture of the two principles. It is true, however, that there is more chance in the case of the sign of the pentagram with the point turned above for reason and conscience to make the best of the operation than in the case of the reversed pentagram, but all depends here on the intellectual and moral state of the operator. A perverse intellectuality would certainly make worse use of the upright pentagram than a sound will motivated by a good intention would of the reversed pentagram. Therefore let us not be afraid of the reversed pentagram, or depend too much on the upright pentagram.

But let us return to the quinternary bound and united to the fullness of the decad, i.e. to the sacred pentagram of five wounds. Let us consider it now not as an individual affair but rather as one for the whole of mankind.

Now, the history of mankind – seen from its "nocturnal" side – is at root the operation of a limited number of magical formulas and signs. Whatever you may do, you place yourself under the aegis of such a formula and sign. The Cross, the Pentagram and the Hexagram are signs and formulas which operate in the history of mankind. The Cross is the vow and virtue of Obedience, i.e. the sign and formula of F a i t h, as horizontal human respiration and vertical divine respiration united together.

The Pentagram is initiative; it is effort and work, i.e. the vow and virtue of Poverty – or the sign and formula of H o p e as the effect of the presence of divine light

here below.

The Hexagram is the vow and virtue of Chastity, i.e. the sign and formula of Love, as the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul.

The spiritual history of mankind is the way from the Cross to the Pentagram, and from the Pentagram to the Hexagram, i.e. it is the school of obedience, poverty and chastity, and it is at the same time the divine, magical operation where Love is attained through Faith by means of Hope.

The Middle Ages erected the Cross above the nations, societies, aspirations and thoughts of Europe. This was the epoch of obedience and Faith — accompanied by every imaginable human abuse. This was followed by an epoch where the dawn of Hope made itself felt. Humanism, with its flourishing of Renaissance art, philosophy and science, was born under the sign of Hope. The sign of the Pentagram began its ascent. It was then that opposition arose between the sacred pentagram of five wounds and the pentagram of the emancipated personality. A purely humanistic art, science and magic had its development under the sign of the pentagram of Hope in man, as opposed to the sign of the pentagram of Hope in God, i.e, the sacred pentagram of the five wounds, under which latter sign Christian esotericism — Christian-orientated mysticism, gnosis, sacred magic and Hermeticism — has its development.

The impulse of freedom — of hope in emancipated man — has built up and demolished a great deal. It has created a materialistic civilization without parallel, but at the same time it has destroyed the hierarchical order — the order of spiritual obedience. A series of religious, political and social revolutions has ensued.

But the hierarchical order is eternal and obedience is indispensable. Now, new hierarchical orders are beginning to be established, replacing Obedience by tyranny and dictatorship. For he who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind (cf. Hosea ix,7) — this is a truth that we are learning with so much suffering today. The pentagram of hope in emancipated man has in former times sown the wind — and we and our contemporaries are now reaping the whirlwind.

Now, the post of Pope in the spiritual history of mankind is that of guardian of the sacred pentagram of the five wounds, i.e. he guards the one legitimate way of passing from the Cross to the Pentagram and from the Pentagram to the Hexagram. The function of the spiritual post of Pope is to see to it that it is only after the Cross is taken up that the Pentagram has its ascent and that it is only after the sacred Pentagram of the five wounds is taken up that the raising of the Hexagram takes place. The mission of the post of Pope is to take care that spiritual Obedience, Poverty and Chastity - free and holy — do not disappear from the world and that there are always people in the world who embrace them and represent them. For these three practical vows constitute the preliminary condition for living Faith, luminous Hope and ardent Love, i.e. for the spiritual respiration of humanity. Mankind would suffocate spiritually without Faith, Hope and

Love or Charity. And it would be bereft of these if the practice of spiritual Obedience, Poverty and Charity — free and holy — were to cease.

The post of Pope or the Holy See is a formula of divine magic — just as the post of Emperor is — in the history of humanity. It is what is meant by the esoteric term Petrus ("P e t e r"). (ΠΈΤΡΑ = petra = rock). Petrus is the term in the Old and in the New Testament designating the divine, immovable ordinance or formula of divine magic. This is why the post of Pope was founded upon the quality of Petrus (Peter):-

> "And I tell you, you are Peter (Petrus), and on this rock (petra) I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew xvi, 18)

The five "gates of hell" — the will-to-greatness, the desire to take and to keep, the desire to advance and to hold on to at the expense of others — being the counter-formula, shall not prevail against the formula of the five wounds. And these wounds are "the keys to the kingdom of heaven".

The divine magical power of these keys is such that whatever is b o u n d by their virtue on earth will be b o u n d in heaven and that whatever is l o o s e n e d by their virtue on earth will be l o o s e n e d in heaven. For that which is above is as that which is below and that which is below is as that which is above. And when disobedience, greed and unchastity prevail on the earth of such a kind that there never was before — then it is the virtue of the keys or the s a c r e d w o u n d s which can re-establish the unity of that which is above and that which is below, i.e. "t o b i n d" and "t o l o o s e n", by an act which, put into words, would have the tenor of the following:-

May that which is <u>a b e v e</u> <u>b e</u> as that which is <u>b e l e w</u>, and may that which is <u>b e l e w</u> <u>b e</u> as that which is <u>a b e v e</u>.

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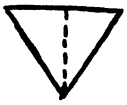
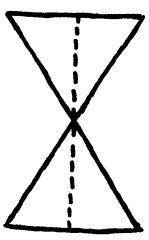
The idea of the hierarchy of the Emperor might be presented as:

The idea of the hierarchy of the P o p e might be presented as: 

Together they make: 

Letter VI: Meditation
on the sixth Major Arcanum of the Tarot
"The Lover"---
"L'Amoureux"

She seizes him and kisses him,
And with impudent face she says to him:
I had to offer sacrifices,
And today I have paid my vows.
So now I have come out to meet you,
To seek you eagerly, and I have found you.
(Proverbs vii, 13-15)

I, Wisdom, dwell in prudence,
And I possess knowledge and discretion...
I love those who love me,
And those who seek me find me.
(Proverbs viii, 12, 17)

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a ring upon your arm;
For love is as strong as death...
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
A flame of the Eternal.
(Song of Songs viii, 6-7)

Dear Unknown Friend,

Here the whole composition of Card VI is translated from the visual language of the Tarot into that of the poetry of Solomon. For there a dark-haired woman with an impudent face clad in a red robe seizes the shoulder of the young man while another, with fair hair and dressed in a blue mantle, makes appeal to his heart with a chaste gesture of her left hand. At the same time, above, a winged infant archer, standing out against a white sphere emitting red, yellow and blue flames, is about to let fly an arrow directed at the other shoulder of the young man. Does one not hear, in contemplating the sixth Card of the Tarot, a voice which says: "I have found you", and another which says: "Those who seek me find me"? Does one not recognize the voice of sensuality and the voice of the heart, and likewise the flashes of fire from above of which king Solomon speaks?

The central theme of the sixth arcanum is therefore that of the practice of the vow of Chastity, just as the fifth arcanum had Poverty as its theme and the fourth

Obedience. The sixth arcanum is at the same time the summary of the two preceding Arcana – Chastity being the fruit of Obedience and Poverty. It summarizes the three "vows" or methods of spiritual discipline in contrasting them with the three trials or temptations opposed to these vows. The choice before which the young man of the sixth arcanum finds himself placed is of greater significance than that between vice and virtue. It is a matter here of choice between on the one hand the way of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity and on the other hand the way of Power, Richness and Debauchery. The practical teaching of the arcanum "the Lover" is to do with the three vows and the three corresponding temptations. For this is the practical doctrine of the Hexagram or Sexternary.

The three vows are, in essence, memories of Paradise, where man was united with God (Obedience), where he possessed everything at once (Poverty), and where his companion was at one and the same time his wife, his friend, his sister and his mother (Chastity). For the real presence of God necessarily entails the action of prostrating oneself in the face of Him "who is more me than I myself am" – and here lies the root and source of the vow of Obedience; the vision of the forces, substances and essences of the world in the guise of the garden of divine symbols (the garden of Eden) signifies the possession of everything without choosing, without laying hold of, or without appropriating any particular thing isolated from the whole – and here lies the root and source of the vow of Poverty; lastly, total communion between two, between One and Another, which comprises the entire range of all possible relationships of spirit, soul and body between two polarized beings necessarily constitutes the absolute wholeness of spiritual, psychic and physical being, in love – and here lies the root and source of the vow of Chastity.

One is chaste only when one loves with the totality of one's being. Chastity is not wholeness of being in indifference, but rather in the love which is "strong as death and whose flashes are flashes of fire, the flame of the Eternal". It is living unity. It is three – spirit, soul and body – which are one, and the other three – spirit, soul and body – which are one; and three and three make s i x, and six is two, and two is o n e.

This is the formula of Chastity in love. It is the formula of Adam-Eve. And it is this which is the principle of Chastity, the living memory of Paradise.

And the celibacy of monks and nuns? How does the formula of Chastity "Adam-Eve" apply here?

Love is strong as death, i.e. death does not destroy it. Death can neither let one forget nor let one cease to hope. Those of us – we human souls of today – who bear within ourselves the flame of the memory of Eden cannot forget it, nor can we cease to hope for it. And if human souls come into the world with the imprint of this memory, and also with the impression of knowing that the meeting with the Other will not take place for them in this life here below, they will then live this life as if widowed, in so far as they

remember, and as if engaged, in so far as they hope. Now, all true monks are widowers and fiancés, and all true nuns are widows and fiancées, in the depths of their hearts. The true celibate bears witness to the eternity of love, just as the miracle of true marriage bears witness to its reality.

Yes, dear Unknown Friend, life is profound and its profundity is like an abyss of fathomless depth. NIETZSCHE felt this and knew how to express it in his "Song of the Night" ("Nachtlied" from "Thus Spake Zarathustra", part iii, ch. 15) –

"O Mensch, gib acht,
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht –
Ich schlief, ich schlief – aus tiefen Traum bin ich erwacht –
Die Welt ist tief, noch tiefer als der Tag gedacht,
Tief ist ihr Weh,
Die Lust – noch tiefer als das Herzeleid –
Weh spricht – Vergeh,
Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit, will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit."

"O man! Take heed!
What saith deep Midnight, indeed?
I lay asleep, asleep –
I waked from my deep dream –
The world is deep,
And deeper than ever day may deem.
Deep is its woe –
Joy – deeper yet than woe is she:
Saith woe: Hence, go!
Yet Joy would have Eternity –
Profound, profound Eternity!"

(Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", trsl. A. Tille, revised M. M. Bozman, Everyman Library, 1958, p. 284-285)

Thus, it is the same arrow – "the arrow of fire, of the flame of the Eternal" – which brings about true celibacy as well as true marriage. The heart of the monk is pierced – and this is why he is a monk – just as is the heart of the fiancé on the eve of the wedding. Where is more truth or more beauty to be found? Who can say?

And charity, the love of one's neighbor? What is its relationship with the love whose prototype is given by the formula "Adam-Eve"?

We are surrounded by innumerable living and conscious beings – visible and invisible. But rather than knowing that they really exist and that they are as much alive as we ourselves, it nevertheless appears to us that they have a less real existence and that they are less living than we ourselves. For us it is WE who experience the full

measure of the intensity of reality, while other beings seem, in comparison with ourselves, to be less real; their existence seems to be more of the nature of a shadow than full reality. Our thoughts tell us that this is an illusion, that beings around us are as real as we ourselves are, and that they live just as intensely as we do. Yet fine as it is to say these things, all the same we feel ourselves at the center of reality, and we feel other beings to be removed from this center. That one qualifies this illusion as "egocentricity", or "egoism", or "ahamkara" (the illusion of self), or the "effect of the primordial Fall", does not matter; it does not alter the fact that we feel ourselves to be more real than others.

Now, to feel something as real in the measure of its full reality is to l o v e. It is love which awakens us to the reality of ourselves, to the reality of others, to the reality of the world and the reality of God. In so far as we love ourselves, we feel real. And we do not love — or we do not love as much as ourselves — other beings, who seem to us to be less real.

Now, two ways, two quite different methods exist which can free us from the illusion "me, living - you, shadow", and we have a choice. The one is to extinguish love of oneself and to become a "shadow amongst shadows". This is the equality of indifference. India offers us this method of liberation from ahamkara, the illusion of self. This illusion is destroyed by extending the indifference that one has for other beings to oneself. Here one reduces oneself to the state of a shadow equal to the other surrounding shadows. Maya, the great illusion, is to believe that individual beings, me and you, should be something more than shadows — appearances without reality. The formula for realizing this is therefore: "m e, s h a d o w — y o u, s h a d o w".

The other way or method is that of extending the love that one has for oneself to other beings, in order to arrive at the realization of the formula: "m e, l i v i n g — y o u, l i v i n g". Here it is a matter of rendering other beings as real as oneself, i.e. of loving them as oneself. To be able to attain this, one has first to love one's neighbor as oneself. For love is not an abstract program but, rather, it is substance and intensity. It is necessary therefore that one radiates the substance and intensity of love with regard to one individual being in order that one can begin to ray it out in all directions. "To be able to make gold one has to have gold", say the alchemists. The spiritual counterpart to this maxim is that in order to be able to love everyone one has to love or to have loved someone. This someone is one's neighbor.

Who is one's neighbor, understood in the Hermetic sense, i.e. meaning at one and the same time in a mystical, gnostic, magical and metaphysical sense? It is the being nearest to one at or since the beginning; this is the sister-soul for all eternity; this is one's twin-soul, the soul together with whom one beheld the dawn of mankind.

The dawn of mankind: it is this which the Bible describes as Paradise. Now, this was at the stage of existence that God said: It is not good that Adam should be alone

(Genesis ii,18).

To be: this is to love. To be alone: this is to love oneself. Now, "it is not good (t o v) that Adam should be alone" means to say: it is not good that man loves nobody but himself. This is why Y H V H - Elohim said: I will make him a helper similar to him ('e z e r k e n ē g e d o, helper corresponding to him). And as Eve was part of Adam himself, he loved her as himself. Eve was therefore the "neighbor", the being nearest to Adam ("bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh").

This is the origin of love, and it is common both to love which unites man and woman and to love of one's neighbor. In the beginning there was only one love and its source was one, since its principle was one.

All forms of love (charity, friendship, paternal love, maternal love, filial love, brotherly love) derive from the same unique primordial root of the fact of the couple Adam-Eve. For it is then that love — the reality of the Other — issued forth and could subsequently branch out and diversify. It is the warmth of love of the first couple (and it does not matter if there was only one couple or if there were thousands of them - it is a question of the fact of the first qualitative issuing forth of love and not of the number of simultaneous or successive cases of this issuing forth) which is reflected in the love of parents for their children, reflected in turn in the love of children for their parents, reflected again in in the love of children amongst themselves, reflected lastly in the love for all kinship of human beings and beyond immediate kinship, by analogy, for all that lives and breathes... Love once born as substance and intensity, tends to spread, ramify and diversify according to the forms of human relationships into which it enters. It is a cascading current which tends to fill and inundate all. This is why when there is true love between parents, the children love their parents, by analogy, and love each other; they love, by analogy — as their brothers and sisters by psychological "adoption" — their friends in school and in the neighborhood; they love (always by analogy) their teachers, tutors, priests, etc. through reflection of the love that they have for their parents; and later they love their husbands and wives, as their parents once loved one another.

All this is clearly the inverse of Sigmund FREUD's pansexual doctrine. For Freud it is "libido" or sexual desire which is the basis of all human psychological activity, which constitutes the motivating energy thereof, and which then becomes — through the process of "sublimation" or direction through channels other than the satisfaction of sexual desire — creative force: socially, artistically, in science and religion. However, the whole of love understood in the sense of the formula "Adam-Eve", is to sexual desire as white light containing the seven colors is to the color red. "Adam-Eve" love includes the whole range of undifferentiated colors, while Freud's "libido" is only a single color isolated and separated from the whole. And this separation from the whole -- and the whole is the principle of Chastity — is exactly the inverse of Chastity; it is the very principle of unchastity. For unchastity is nothing other than the autonomy of carnal desire, so that the wholeness of

the human being – in spirit, soul and body – is ruined. Sexual desire is only one aspect of love – the aspect reflected by that part of the physical and psychic organism which is the special domain of the "four-petalled lotus" – and it constitutes only one-seventh of the of the human psychic-physical organism. There are therefore six more aspects, whose significance is in no way less, and which Freud's doctrine ignores (or even denies their existence).

Just as Karl MARX, being impressed by the partial truth (reduced to its simplest basis) that it is first necessary to eat in order to be able to think, raised the economic interest to THE principle of man and the history of civilization, so Sigmund Freud, being impressed by the partial truth that it is first necessary to be born in order to be able to eat and to think, and that sexual desire is necessary for birth, raised this latter to THE principle of man and the whole of human culture. As Marx saw "homo oeconomicus" (economic man) at the basis of "homo sapiens", so Freud saw "homo sexualis" (sexual man) at the basis of "homo sapiens".

Alfred ADLER could not follow his master in the attribution of absolute primacy to sex – his experience on many occasions contradicting this doctrine. Thus this founder of another school of depth psychology ("Tiefenpsychologie") was led to the discovery that it is the will-to-power which plays the leading role at the foundation of the human being. Adler then advanced the doctrine of "homo potestatis" – man motivated by the will-to-power – instead of the "homo sapiens" of XVIIIth century science, the "homo oeconomicus" of Mark, and the "homo sexualis" of Freud.

However, Carl Gustav JUNG, while admitting the partial truth of the doctrines of Freud and Adler, was led by his clinical experience to the discovery of a much deeper layer of the psyche than that studied by Freud and Adler. He had to admit the reality of a religious layer, which lies at a much greater depth than the layers of sex and of the will-to-power. Thus, thanks to the work of Jung, man is fundamentally "homo religiosus", a religious being, though he may also be an economic entity, a sexual entity and an entity aspiring to power.

Now, Carl Gustav JUNG re-established the principle of Chastity in the domain of psychology – the other psychological schools mentioned being contrary to Chastity, since they break down the unity of the spiritual, psychic and physical elements of the human being. He discovered the divine breath at the core of the human being.

At the same time the work of Jung constitutes the inauguration of a new method in the domain of psychology. It is the method of exploration of psychic layers in succession – corresponding to the layers of archaeology, palaeontology and geology. And just as archaeology, palaeontology and geology regard the layers with which they have to do as archives of the past (as time becomes space), so does the depth psychology of the school of Jung treat psychic layers as the living past of the soul, which is as distant as the layer in question is deep. The measure of depth here is at the same time that of the history of the soul's past, going back beyond the threshold of birth. One can well discuss whether the layers are collective or individual, whether their continuance is due to heredity or

reincarnation – but one can no longer deny the reality of these layers or their value as a key to the "psychic history" of man and mankind. More than that: one can no longer deny the fact that, in the psychic domain, nothing dies and that the whole past lives present in the diverse layers of the depths of consciousness – the "unconscious" or subconsciousness – of the soul. Palaeontological and geological layers contain only the imprints and fossils of the now dead past; psychic layers, in contrast, constitute a living witness to the actual past. They are the past which continues to live. They are memory – not intellectual, but psychically substantial – of the actual past. For this reason nothing perishes and nothing is lost in the domain of the psyche – essential history, i.e. real joy and suffering, real religions and revelations of the past, continue to live in us, and it is in we ourselves that the key to the essential history of mankind is to be found.

Now, it is in we ourselves that there is to be found the "Edenic" layer, or that of Paradise and the Fall, of which an account is found in the Book of Genesis of Moses. Do you doubt the essential truth of this account? Descend into the depths of your own soul, descend as far as the roots, to the sources of feeling, will and intelligence – and you will know. You will know, i.e. you will have certainty that the Biblical narrative is true in the most profound and authentic sense of the word – in the sense that you must deny yourself, deny the witness of the inner structure of your own soul, in order to be able to doubt the intrinsic truth of Moses' account. The descent into the depths of your own soul in meditating upon the account of Paradise in Genesis will render you incapable of doubt. Such is the nature of the certainty that one can have here.

But, of course, it is not a matter of certainty with regard to the garden, its trees, the serpent, the apple or other forbidden fruit, but rather with regard to the vital, psychic and spiritual realities that these images or symbols reveal. It is not the symbolic language of the account which gives certainty of its truth, but rather what it expresses.

It expresses in symbolic language the first layer – first in the sense of the "root of all that is human in human nature" – of human psychic life, or its "beginning". Now, knowledge of the beginning, initium in Latin, is the essence of initiation. Initiation is the conscious experience of the initial microcosmic state (this is the Hermetic initiation), and of the initial macrocosmic state (this is the Pythagorean initiation). The first is a conscious descent into the depths of the human being, to the initial layer. Its method is enstasy, i.e. experience of the depths at the foundation within oneself. Here one becomes more and more profound until one awakens within oneself to the primordial layer – or the "image and likeness of God" – which is the aim of enstasy. It is above all by means of the sense of "spiritual touch" that this experience of enstasy is effected. One can compare it to a chemical experiment undergone on the psychic and spiritual plane.

The second initiation experience – that we have designated "Pythagorean" from a historical point of view – is based above all on the "auditory" sense or sense of "spiritual hearing". It is essentially musical, just as the first is substantial or alchemical. It is by ecstasy – or

rapture, or going out of oneself – that the macrocosmic layers ("spheres" or "heavens") reveal themselves to consciousness. Pythagoras' "music of the spheres" was this experience, and it is this which was the source of the Pythagorean doctrine concerning the musical and mathematical structure of the macrocosm. For sounds, numbers and geometrical forms were the three stages of representing and mentally visualizing the ineffable experience of the "music of the spheres".

It is only from a historical point of view that we have designated as "Pythagorean" the macrocosmic initiation by means of ecstasy. For it is in no way a prerogative of the epoch prior to Christianity. The following is what the apostle Paul says of his own experience of the "spheres" or "heavens" in ecstasy:-

> "I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was carried up to the third heaven – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows. And I know that this man was raised up into Paradise – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – and he heard ineffable words, which man is not allowed to express – (et audivit arcane verba, quae non licet homini loqui -- kai ekousen arreta remata, ha ouk exon anthropo lalesai) –" (2 Corinthians xii, 2-4)

Saint PAUL was therefore carried up to the third heaven or the third macrocosmic sphere and he was then raised up into Paradise where he heard ineffable words... His macrocosmic initiation through ecstasy therefore took place in the sphere of Paradise, the conscious experience of which – "he heard ineffable words" – is its aim, just as it is also the aim of initiation through enstasy, which latter is characterized by experience of the primordial layer at the root of the human being or microcosm. The macrocosmic sphere of Paradise and the microcosmic layer of Eden are the "initia", the beginnings, to which one is initiated in the macrocosmic initiation as well as in the microcosmic initiation. Ecstasy to the heights beyond oneself and enstasy into the depths within oneself lead to knowledge of the same fundamental truth.

Christian esotericism unites these two methods of initiation. The Master has two groups of disciples – "disciples of the day" and "disciples of the night" – the first being disciples of the way of enstasy and the latter those of the way of ecstasy. He has also a third group of disciples "of day and night", i.e. who possess the keys to both doors at once, to the door of ecstasy and that of enstasy. Thus, the apostle John, author of the Gospel of the Word made Flesh, was at the same time he who listened to the heart of the Master. He had the twofold experience – microcosmic and macrocosmic – of the cosmic Word and the Sacred Heart, of which the litany says: "Cor Jesu, rex et centrum omnium cordium" ("Heart of Jesus, king and center of all hearts"). It is thanks to this twofold experience that the Gospel which he wrote is at one and the same time so cosmic and so humanly intimate – of such heights and depths simultaneously. There, the macrocosmic solar sphere and the microcosmic solar sphere are united, which explains the singular magic of this Gospel.

For the reality of Paradise is the unity of the macrocosmic solar sphere and the microcosmic solar layer – the sphere of the cosmic heart and the solar foundation of the human heart. Christian initiation is the conscious experience of the heart of the world

and the solar nature of man. G o d - M a n is the Initiator, and there is no other.

What we understand by the term "Initiator" is what the early Christians understood by the word "Kyrios", "Dominus" or "Lord". With this, Christian esotericism or Hermeticism is in full accord - with absolute sincerity, today as in the past - when the words of the Creed are recited in church:

"Et in <u>unum Dominum</u> Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum,
Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula, Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
Deum verum de Deo vero,
Genitum, non factum, consubstantialem Patri
per quem omnia facta sunt;
Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis.
Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto
ex Maria Virgine: et homo factus est."

"We believe in <u>one Lord</u>, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate:
from the Virgin Mary, and was made man."

We bow with respect and gratitude before all the great human souls of the past and present - the sages, the righteous, the prophets, the saints of all continents and all epochs throughout the whole of human history - and we are ready to learn from them all that they wish and are able to teach, but we have only one sole Initiator or Lord; we are obliged to reiterate this for the sake of certainty.

But let us return to the theme of Paradise.

"Paradise" is therefore at one and the same time the fundamental layer of our soul and a cosmic sphere. One finds it just as well through enstasy as by ecstasy. It is the realm of beginning, and therefore of principles. Above we came across the principle of the three vows: obedience, poverty and chastity. Paradise, being the realm of beginning and principles, is at the same time that of the beginning of the "Fall" or the principle of <u>temptation</u>, i.e. the principle of transition from obedience to disobedience, from poverty to greed, and from chastity to unchastity.

The temptation in Paradise was threefold, just as was the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness. The following are the essential elements of the triple temptation in Paradise, as it is described in the account of the Fall in the books of Genesis:

1. Eve <u>listened</u> to the voice of the Serpent;
2. She <u>s a w</u> that the tree "was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes";
3. She <u>t o o k</u> of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

The voice of the Serpent is that of the living being ("animal") whose intelligence is most advanced ("the most artful") amongst all living beings ("animals") whose consciousness is turned towards the horizontal ("animals of the fields"). Now, the intelligence of Adam-Eve was, before the Fall, vertical; their eyes had not yet been "opened", and they "were both naked, and were not ashamed", i.e. they were conscious of everything vertically – from above to below or, in other words, in God, through God and for God. They were not conscious of "naked" things, i.e. things separated from God. The formula expressing their perception, their vision of things was: "That which is above is as that which is below, and that which is below is as that which is above". Thus, although they "were both naked", they "were not ashamed". Because they saw divine ideality expressing itself through phenomenal reality. It was vertical con-sciousness (simultaneous knowledge of the ideal and the real), whose principles are found formulated in the Emerald Table. The formula of horizontal consciousness of the Serpent (Nahasch) would be that of realism, pure and simple:- "That which is in me is as that which is outside of me, and that which is outside of me is as that which is in me". This is horizontal con-sciousness (simultaneous knowledge of the subjective and the objective), which sees things not in God, but separated from Him or "naked" – within itself, through itself and for itself. And as the "self" here replaces God (horizontal consciousness being that of the opposition of subject and object), the Serpent says that on the day when Adam-Eve (Adam and Eve) eat fruit from the tree which is in the middle of the garden, their eyes will open as they will be as gods, i.e. the "self" will replace the function previously filled by God and that they will know good and evil. If before they saw things in divine light, they will see them now in their own light, i.e. the function of illumination will belong to them, just as it once belonged to God.

The source of the light will be transferred from God to man.

This was the temptation that Eve heard in listening to the voice of the Serpent. Its essence is the principle of p o w e r, which is autonomy of the light of consciousness. And Eve listened to the voice of the Serpent. This voice was as audible to her as the other Voice bearing from above the single commandment: You may eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day that you eat of it you shall die".

She therefore heard t w o voices, two inspirations arising from contrary sources. Here is the origin and the principle of d o u b t. Doubt is twofold inspiration. F a i t h is a single inspiration. Certainty is vanquished doubt; it is faith regained.

Obedience, the principle of Obedience, is devotion without reserve to the sole voice from above. Now, the very fact that Eve listened to another voice than that from above, that she compared the two voices, i.e. considered them as if they belonged to the same plane (and therefore she doubted), this very fact was an act of spiritual disobedience and was the root cause and beginning of the Fall.

It was then that she looked at the tree and saw that it "was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes" – this was the second phase of the temptation and the second

stage of the Fall. For it was after having listened to the voice of the Serpent that she looked at the tree. She looked at it in a new way – no longer as formerly, when the sole Voice from above vibrated in her being, when she experienced not the least attraction for the tree, but rather now with the word of the Serpent vibrating in her being – with a questioning, comparing, doubting look, i.e. ready to have experience. Because when one is in doubt, one is induced to make experiments in order to dispel it – if one does not surmount it by raising oneself to a higher plane.

It was in looking at the tree in this new way that it appeared to her "good for food, and a delight to the eyes". To be induced to seek experience is the beginning and the principle of greed, the principle opposed to Poverty.

It was after having looked at the tree in a new way that Eve stretched forth her hand and "she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate". Here is the third phase of the temptation and the third stage of the Fall: it is to escape from doubt by plunging into experience and making the other take part.

Here is the beginning and the principle of unchastity, contrary to the principle of Chastity. Because to seek experiences or to make experiments based on doubt is the very essence of carnal, psychic and spiritual unchastity. For this reason one does not carry out experiments in Christian esotericism or Hermeticism. One would never take recourse to experiments with a view to dispelling doubt. One has experiences, of course, but one does not make experiments. Because it would be contrary to the holy vow of Chastity to put forward a hand and to take from the tree of knowledge. The spiritual world does not in any way suffer experimenters. One seeks, one asks, one knocks at its door. But one does not open it by force. One waits for it to be opened.

The Christian doctrine and experience of Grace expresses the very essence of Chastity, just as it contains the principles of Poverty and Obedience. It is doctrine concerning chaste relationships between that which is below and that which is above. God is not an object and neither is He an object of knowledge. He is the source of illuminatory and revelatory grace. He cannot be grasped, but he can certainly reveal himself.

Here we have Chastity, Poverty and Obedience underlying the Christian doctrine and experience of Grace. Now, all Christian esotericism or Hermeticism, including here all its mysticism, gnosis and magic, is founded on the experience and doctrine of grace, one of the results of which is initiation. Initiation is an act of grace from above. It cannot be achieved or produced by any technical outer or inner procedures. One does not initiate oneself; one becomes initiated.

G r a c e .... are we not tired of the age-old repetition of this subject in Sunday sermons in church, in theological treatises, in the writings of mystics and, lastly, in the pompous declarations of monarchs – be they "High-Christian", "Catholic", "Orthodox" or "defenders of the Faith"? Have we not heard and read about it to the point of satiety... whenever and wherever the perfume of incense is smelled and spiritual hymns are heard?

Lastly, is not a disciple of modern Hermeticism – he who is getting ready to dare the great adventure of the quest for the Great Arcanum – in the right to ask that he be spared sermons on this mollifying and monotonous subject? Does it not presume too little of his character to invite him to renounce the magnificent magical quaternary – "to dare, to will, to be silent, and to know" – for the whining "Kyrie eleison"?

There is nothing more banal than the rising of the sun which repeats itself day after day throughout innumerable millions of years... Yet it is thanks to this banal phenomenon that our eyes – organs for the light of the sun – see all the new things that life brings. Just as the light of the sun renders seeing with regard to things of the physical world, so does the light of the spiritual sun – G r a c e – render us seeing with regard to what is brought about from the spiritual world. Light is necessary in order to be able to see, there as well as here.

Similarly, air is necessary in order to breathe and to live. Is not the air which surrounds us a perfect analogy for the "gratia gratis data" – for gratuitously bestowed grace? Because to live in the spirit, vivifying spirit is necessary, which is the air of spiritual respiration.

Can one produce artificially intellectual, moral or artistic <u>inspiration</u>? Can the lungs produce the air which they need for respiration?

Now, the <u>principle</u> of grace underlies earthly life as well as spiritual life. It is wholly – below and above – ruled by the <u>laws</u> of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. The lungs know that it is necessary to breathe – and they obey. The lungs know that they are in want – and they breathe in. They love purity – and they breathe out. The very process of breathing teaches the laws of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity, i.e. it is a lesson (by analogy) in Grace. Conscious breathing in of the reality of Grace is Christian "Hatha-Yoga". Christian "Hatha-Yoga" is the <u>vertical</u> breathing of Prayer and Benediction – or, in other words, one opens oneself to Grace and one receives it.

With respect to the magnificent quaternary of traditional magic: "to dare, to will, to be silent, and to know", it is formulated – mutandis mutatis – by the Master in the following way: "Ask, and it will be given you;
Seek, and you will find;
Knock, and it will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks receives,
And he who seeks finds,
And to him who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew vii, 7-8)

It is a matter of daring to ask, of the will to seek, of being silent in order to knock, and of knowing when it is opened to you. For knowledge does not happen automatically; it is what is revealed when the door is opened.

This is the formula of the synthesis of effort and grace, of the principle of work and that of receptivity, and, lastly, of merit and gift. This synthesis enunciates the absolute law of all spiritual progress and, consequently, all spiritual discipline, whether it be practiced by a solitary Christian Hermeticist, or by a community in a cloister or convent, or by a

religious or mystical order, or by any esoteric or Christian-Hermetic fraternity. It is the law which every Christian disciple, of every Christian spiritual school, obeys. And Christian Hermeticism, i.e. the whole of traditional mysticism, gnosis, magic and occult philosophy, passed through baptism and transfiguration by the fire, light and life of Christianity, is in no way an exception here. Hermeticism without grace is only sterile erudite historicism; Hermeticism without effort is only superficial sentimental aestheticism. There is certainly THE WORK in Hermeticism, and this work is the child of Grace and effort.

Dear Unknown Friend, if you have knowledge of theology, you will recognize here the pure and simple doctrine of the Catholic Church concerning the relationship between work and Grace. You find here again the rejection of Pelagianism, according to which it is only work (or effort) which counts, and also of Luther's Protestantism, according to which it is only Grace which counts. You find here the doctrine of the Catholic Church that "natura vulnerata, non deleta" is also implied, i.e. that Nature is not entirely corrupt in consequence of the Fall, but that it preserves a virgin element and that consequently there is also an element in human nature which is therefore capable of effort and work which counts.

Thus, does Christian Hermeticism simply borrow the fundamental principles of its Hermetic-philosophical teaching from Catholic theology?

It should not be forgotten that Christian Hermeticism is not a religion apart, nor a church apart, nor even a science apart, which would compete with religion, with the Church, or with science. It is the connecting link (hyphen) between mysticism, gnosis and magic, expressed through symbolism – symbolism being the means of expression of the dimensions of depth and height (and therefore of enstasy and ecstasy), of all that is universal (which corresponds to the dimension of breadth), and of all that is traditional (corresponding to the dimension of length). Being Christian, Hermeticism accepts the cross of the Universality, the Tradition, the Depth and the Height of Christianity, in the sense of the apostle Paul when he said: "That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend (com-prehend) with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." (Ephesians iii, 18-19)
This is the complete formula of initiation.

Now, in aspiring to knowledge and experience of the Depth and Height of Universal Christianity – i.e. Catholic and Traditional, that is, of the Church – Hermeticism borrows nothing and cannot borrow anything from the Church, since it is nothing other, and is unable to be anything other, than an aspect of the Church itself, namely the aspect of its dimension of of depth and height. It is therefore flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood; it does not borrow from the Church, since it is part of it. It is the invisible aspect of Universality (in space) and Tradition (in time), both of which become visible in the Church. For the Church is not only universal and traditional, but also profound and sublime. Now, Christian Hermeticism is only the vertical aspect, i.e. that of depth and height, of the Church. This in no

way means to say that individual Hermeticists will be in possession of all that is profound and sublime (i.e. all the esotericism) of the Church; it means to say only that one is a Christian Hermeticist in so far as one has consciousness of the depth and the height of the universal tradition of Christianity and that each person who has this experience and consciousness represents Christian Hermeticism. Then, are all the Church doctors who teach the way of spiritual experience beyond theoretical theology, and all the saints and mystics of the Church who have had this experience, at the same time Hermeticists? Yes, they are in so far as they are witnesses and representatives of the profound and sublime in Christianity. They all have much to say to modern Hermeticists, who have much to learn from them. Take for example "De triplici via" ("The Threefold Way") by St. BONAVENTURA, Chapter iii, 14. There you will read :-

"Note, lastly, what the Truth must be :-

1°- in the first Hierarchy: evoked by the utterance of prayer,
work of the Angels;
heard in study and reading,
work of the Archangels;
announced through example and preaching,
work of the Principalities.

2°- in the second Hierarchy: joined with as refuge and place of indulgence,
work of the Powers;
apprehended through zeal and emulation,
work of the Virtues;
conjoined with in self-deprecation and mortification,
work of the Dominions.

3°- in the third Hierarchy :- worshipped through sacrifice and praise,
work of the Thrones;
admired through ecstasy (going out of oneself) and contemplation,
work of the Cherubim;
embraced in kiss and dilection
(amplectanda per osculum et dilectionem),
work of the Seraphim.

Note diligently what I say here, because this is
a fountain of life."

Just a brief fragment to furnish material for years of meditation! Can one, being a Hermeticist, allow oneself to ignore such testimonies (and there are hundreds of them) of the spiritual world and its authentic experience? Fabre d'OLIVET, Eliphas LÉVI, Saint-YVES d'ALVEYDRE, GUAITA, PAPUS and PÉLADAN certainly merit being studied — just as do so many others of Hermetic and occult movements — but studying them alone does not suffice. Are they the only authentic witnesses and are their works the only

first-hand sources of the reality of the spiritual world and experience of it? Let us therefore take heed of all those who know through experience, and let us seek in the first place for the authenticity of the experience instead of for erudition and theoretical speculation.

But let us return to the theme of temptation. It is threefold as we have seen. We are able therefore to speak of t h r e e fundamental temptations which relate to the three fundamental conditions of the state of Grace from Paradise, or to the three vows which form the basis of all spiritual culture following the Fall: Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. This is the practical meaning of the hexagram or the Seal of Solomon: This seal is that of the memory of Paradise and the Fall, i.e. it concerns the Law or T o r a h. For the Law is the child of Paradise and the Temptation.

Since the New Alliance is the fulfillment of the Old, the work of redemption began with the repetition of the three primordial temptations. But this time it was the Son of Man who was tempted, and the temptation took place not in the garden of Eden, but rather in a terrestrial wilderness. And this time it was not the Serpent, "the most artful amongst animals of the fields", who tempted him, but the Prince of this World, i.e. the "new man", the "superman" or the other "son of man" – who, if incarnated, would be the realization of the promise of freedom made by the Serpent. Antichrist, the ideal of biological and historical evolution without grace, is not an individuality or entity created by God, but rather the egregore or phantom generated through the biological and historical evolution opened up by the Serpent, who is the author and master of the biological and historical evolution that science studies and teaches. The Antichrist is the ultimate product of this evolution without grace and not an entity created by God – the act of divine creation being always, without exception, an act of grace. He is therefore an egregore, an artificial being who owes his existence to collective generation from below.

Let us ponder, therefore, on the notion of egregore with a view to understanding better what the Antichrist is – this important and enigmatic figure of esotericism and Christian Hermeticism, who is at the same time the source of the temptation in the wilderness.

To begin with, here is what Robert AMBELAIN says in "La Kabbale pratique":--

> "One gives the name of Egregore to a Force generated by a powerful spiritual current and then nourished at regular intervals, according to a rhythm in harmony with the Universal Life of the Cosmos, or to a union of Entities united by a common characteristic nature." (Robert Ambelain, "La Kabbale pratique", Paris, 1951, p.175)

This is a definition which leaves nothing more to be desired. It is unfortunately muddled up by the paragraph which immediately follows:

> "In the Invisible, beyond the physical perception of Man, exist artificial beings – generated by devotion, enthusiasm and fanaticism – that one names egregores. These are the souls of great spiritual currents, good or evil. The Mystical Church,

Heavenly Jerusalem, the Body of Christ and all these synonymous names are the epithets that one commonly gives to the egregore of Catholicism. Freemasonry, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism are egregores. Great political ideologies are other egregores." (ibid., p.175)

Here is a singular mixture of truth and falsehood. What is true here is that invisible artificial collectively-engendered beings exist, i.e. that egregores are real; but what is false is the confusion of things which are of an entirely different nature (the "Body of Christ" and "political ideologies"!) without distinguishing the substance here. Because if one classifies the Mystical Church, the Body of Christ, Freemasonry and Buddhism as "egregores", i.e. as "artificial beings generated by devotion, enthusiasm and fanaticism", why not consider God also as an egregore?

No, there are superhuman spiritual entities which are not artificially engendered, but which manifest themselves and reveal themselves. The confusion between that which descends from above and that which is engendered from below is, moreover, very widespread among materialistic scientists as also among occultists. Thus, many biologists consider the unity of consciousness – or the human soul – as the epiphenomenon or sum-product of millions of points of consciousness belonging to the cells of the organism's nervous system. For them the "soul" is only an egregore engendered collectively by millions of individual cells. But this is not so. The egregore of the cells certainly exists – this is the phantom, of an electromagnetic nature, which resists decomposition after death for some time and which can manifest in "haunted houses", etc. But this phantom has nothing to do either with the soul itself or with the subtle bodies (etheric or life body, and astral or soul body) with which the soul is clothed in addition to the physical body.

Now, to say that the Mystical Church or the Body of Christ, for example, is an egregore is to advance the thesis that it is a phantom engendered by millions of believers, just as the phantoms of the dead are engendered by millions of cells. The confusion of the soul and the phantom is a sufficiently serious error. No less serious is the case of confusion of revelations and inventions – of spiritual beings who reveal themselves from above, and egregores engendered artifically from below. Because egregores, as powerful as they may be, have only an ephemeral existence, whose duration depends entirely on galvanizing nourishment on the part of their creators. However, it is the souls and spirits from above – forming, inspiring and directing communities of human beings – who nourish and vivify human souls: for example, Archangels (who are the spirits of nations); Principalities (Archai) or "time spirits"; the spiritual entity which is behind Tibetan Buddhism; not to mention Christ, whose Flesh and Blood each day vivifies and unites the Church (Christ's Mystical Body). Egregores are therefore nourished by men, while the latter are nourished by souls and spirits from above.

Nevertheless, although God, Christ, the Holy Virgin, the spiritual hierarchies, the saints, the Church or the Mystical Body of Christ are real entities, there still exists also a phantom or

egregore of the Church, which is its "double", just as every man, every nation, every religion, etc., have their "doubles". But just as he who sees in Russia, for example, only the bear, in France only the cock and in Germany only the wolf, is being unfair towards the country of the Heart, the country of Intelligence and the country of Initiative -- so is one being unjust towards the Catholic Church when one sees, instead of the Mystical Body of Christ, only its historical phantom - the fox. In order to see rightly one has to look rightly. And to look rightly means to endeavor to see through the mists of the phantoms of things. This is one of the principal practical precepts of Christian Hermeticism. It is thanks to the effort to see through the phantoms that one arrives at knowledge of the depth and height spoken of by the apostle Paul, which is the very essence of Hermeticism.

Regarding the Antichrist, this is <u>the phantom of the whole of mankind</u>, the being engendered through the whole historical evolution of humanity. He is the "superman" who haunts the consciousness of all those who seek to elevate themselves through their own effort, without grace. He appeared to Friedrich NIETZSCHE and showed him "in an instant all the kingdoms of the world" which have existed, exist and will exist, in the circle of eternal return (die ewige Wiederkehr); he invited him to cast himself down into the domain which is beyond good and evil (jenseits von Gut und Böse), and to embrace and announce the gospel of <u>Evolution</u>, the gospel of the will-to-power (Wille zur Macht) - <u>this</u>, and this alone ("Gott ist tot...", i.e. "God is dead"), transforms stone (inorganic matter) into bread (organic matter), and organic matter into animal, and animal into man, and man into superman (Übermensch), who is beyond good and evil and who obeys only his own will ("O mein Wille, meine Notwendigkeit, du bist mein Gesetz...").

He appeared to Karl MARX and showed him "in an instant all the kingdoms of the world" where all the slaves of the past are transformed into sovereign masters who no longer obey either God, having dethroned him, or Nature, having subjugated her, and who eat their bread which they owe solely to their own knowledge and effort in transforming stone into bread.

And the Phantom of Humanity has appeared to many others.

He appeared also to the Son of Man in the desert.

This was the meeting of divine Law made flesh and the law of the Serpent - biological and historical evolution - made soul.

Divine Law is grace; it is the activity descending from the Holy Trinity which was revealed forty days before the Temptation in the wilderness, when the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan was accomplished by John the Baptist. The law of the Serpent is the action of the will moving gropingly forward, snaking through epochs and layers of biological evolution, passing from form to form; it is the triad of the will-to-power, the "groping trial" and the transformation of that which is gross into that which is subtle.

Vertical trinitarian Grace and the triadic spirit of horizontal Evolution met, therefore,

in the consciousness of the Son of Man forty days after the baptism in the Jordan. Then the three temptations of the Son of Man took place. And just as the baptism in the Jordan is the prototype of the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, so is the meeting of Grace (received at the baptism in the Jordan) with the quintessence of the evolutionary impulse since the Fall the prototype of the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation. For it is then that Grace from above is firmly established against the law from below. It is then that Evolution gives way to Grace.

The three temptations of the Son of Man in the wilderness were his experience of the directing impulses of evolution, namely the will-to-power, the "groping trial" and the transformation of the gross into the subtle. They signify at the same time the test of the three vows – the vows of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty.

It is with the last trial that Matthew (chap. 4) begins his account of the temptation of Jesus Christ. For the celestial fullness (pleroma) which descended at the time of the baptism in the Jordan brought with it the corresponding terrestrial emptiness (kenoma), which is expressed in the Gospel account by the solitude, the wilderness and the fasting.

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And he fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was hungry."

Now, <u>hunger</u> of the spirit, the soul and the body is the experience of <u>emptiness</u> or poverty. It is therefore the vow of Poverty which is put to the test when the tempter -- "came and said to him: If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread". "Command these stones to become loaves of bread... This is the very essence of the aspiration of humanity in the scientific epoch, namely to victory over poverty. Synthetic resins, synthetic rubber, synthetic fiber, synthetic vitamins, synthetic proteins and... eventually synthetic bread!? – When? Soon, perhaps. Who knows?

Command these stones to become bread.. This is the formula of evolution in the sense of transformism belonging to the mentality of some academics, who teach that the plant kingdom, i.e. <u>bread</u>, is only a transformation of the mineral kingdom, i.e. "these stones", and that consequently organic matter – bread – is only the result of the physical and chemical regrouping of little molecules into giant molecules ("macromolecules") in the process of polymerization. "Polymerization" is therefore considered today by a number of scientists as the possible – even probable – equivalent of the operation proposed by the tempter in the wilderness, namely the transformation of stones into bread.

The operation proposed by the tempter is at the same time the dominant motif of the doctrines overrunning the world today which regard the economic life as primary and the spiritual life as its epiphenomenon or as an "ideological superstructure" upon the economic basis. That which is below is primary and that which is above is secondary, since it is matter which engenders spirit – such is the dogma commonly underlying "economicism" and "transformism", and the statement made by the tempter to the Son of Man. And this was his reply to this dogma: – "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceeds from the mouth of God".

Let us ponder on this formula.

It expresses, in the first place, the essence of the vow of Poverty. For the vow of Poverty is to live as much from the word which comes from the mouth of God as from the bread which enters the mouth of man.

Then it adds to the law of biological nourishment, where the kingdoms lower than man serve him food, the new law of Grace, where it is the kingdom higher than man, the kingdom of heaven, which feeds him. This means to say that not only the spirit and the soul of man are able to live, i.e. to receive impulses, forces and substances from above, but also his body. The vivifying spiritual effect of divine Magic or Grace with respect to the spiritual and psychic life is the millennial-old common experience of sincere Christians, but it is less known that there were — and there are — cases where the body itself can go without any food for a lapse of time sufficient to cause death from biological hunger a hundredfold. Thus, Teresa NEUMANN lived in our time at Konnersreuth (Bavaria) solely from Holy Communion for decades; St. CATHERINE of SIENNA lived nine years from Holy Communion alone; St. LIDVINA of Schiedam (near Rotterdam, Holland) likewise lived for many years exclusively from Holy Communion — to cite only the cases that are well-verified.

This is the significance of the words: "Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". Here is its principal implication: as the law of evolution, the law of the Serpent, comprises the struggle for existence and as "bread" or food is the principal factor in the struggle for existence, the fact of the entry of Grace into human history since Jesus Christ signifies at the same time the possibility of gradually abolishing the struggle for existence. It is therefore the vow of Poverty which will abolish it.

> "Then the devil took him to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written: He will give his angels charge of you and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him: Again, it is written: You shall not tempt the Lord your God!"

This is the "groping trial", to which natural evolution owes much, which speaks this time. It is the method of so-called natural evolution which has replaced since the Fall the world created by God or Paradise. Because evolution proceeds gropingly from form to form, trying and rejecting, then trying anew.. The world of evolution from protozoa to vertebrates and from vertebrates to mammals and then to apes and to pithecanthropus... is neither the accomplishment of absolute wisdom nor absolute goodness. It is rather the work of a really vast intelligence and a very resolute will pursuing a definite aim determined by the method of "trial and error". One could say that it is a matter more of a great scientific intellect and the will of an experimenter which is revealed in natural evolution (the existence of which one can no longer deny), rather than divine wisdom and goodness. The tableau of evolution that the natural sciences — above all biology — have at last obtained

as the result of prodigious work reveals to us without any doubt the work of a very subtle, but imperfect, intellect and a very determined, but imperfect, will. It is therefore the Serpent, "the most artful animal of the fields", that the world of biological evolution reveals to us, and not God. It is the Serpent who is the "Prince of this world", and who is the author and director of the purely biological evolution following the Fall. Read "Le Phénomène humain" ("The Phenomenon of Man") by Pierre TEILHARD de CHARDIN, which gives the best summary and interpretation that I know of natural evolution; study this book and you could not arrive at any other conclusion than that the world of evolution is the work of the Serpent of Paradise, and that it is only since the prophetic religions (of which there many) and Christianity that the Good News (E u a n g e l i o n) of another way than that of the evolution of the Serpent exists.

Now, the tempter proposed to the Son of Man the method to which he owes his existence -- the t r i a l. "Throw yourself down and it will be seen if it is true that you are the Son of God and that you are not as I am, the son of evolution, son of the Serpent." This was the temptation of Chastity. For, as we have shown above, the spirit of Chastity excludes all trial. The trial is the very essence of what the Bible designates as "fornication". Fornication -- as, moreover, every other vice and also every virtue -- is threefold: spiritual, psychic and carnal. Its root is spiritual; the region of its deployment and growth is that of the soul; and the flesh is simply the domain where it fructifies. It is thus that spiritual error becomes vice and vice becomes sickness.

For this reason the prophets of Israel stigmatized the spiritual fornication of the people of the Old Alliance each time that they let themselves be seduced by the cults of "strange gods" - Bel, Moloch, and Astarte. These gods were only egregores, creatures of the collective human imagination and will, while the Holy One of Israel was the revealed God - unimaginable though He was - having no other relationship with the human will than that of the Law imposed on it. This is why the "strange gods" had a singular attraction for the Israelites, being the gods "of this world" and not the transcendent God of revelation, obedience to which was to return to live in a spiritual monastery in relation to "this world and its gods". They were always being tempted to throw themselves from the height and isolation of the pinnacle of the temple above into the layers of collective instinct below, and to test whether there would be "angels who will bear you up lest you strike your foot against a stone" -- i.e. to try and find in the near and dense layers of the forces of natural evolution directing and protecting forces with less effort than in the height and rare air surrounding the pinnacle of the revealed God's temple. The principle of spiritual fornication is therefore the preference of the subconscious to the conscious and superconscious, of instinct to the Law, and of the world of the Serpent to the world of the WORD.

Just as the first two temptations are directed at the vows of holy Poverty and holy Chastity, so is the third temptation (according to the Gospel of Matthew) directed at the vow of holy Obedience. This time it is a matter of the will-to-power, the Nietzschean "Wille zur Macht".

"Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to him: All these I will give you, if you fall down and worship me. Then Jesus said to him: Begone, Satan! for it is written: You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."

Let us note the elements of this temptation: the very high mountain, all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, worship of he who has the power to rise to the top of the mountain and there to give possession of everything in the kingdoms of his world.

It is a matter, therefore, of accepting the ideal of the Superman ("fall down and worship me"), who is the summit of evolution ("he took him to a very high mountain") and who, having passed through the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms, subjecting them to his power, is Lord over them -- i.e. he is their final cause or aim and ideal, their representative or their collective concentrated will, and he is their master, who has taken their subsequent evolution into his hands. Now, the choice here is between the ideal of the Superman, who is "as God", and God himself.

Holy Obedience is therefore faithfulness to the living God himself; revolt or disobedience is the decision taken in favor of the Superman, who personifies the ideal of the will-to-power.

The sixth Arcanum of the Tarot "The Lover", although it puts in relief only the temptation of Chastity, evokes the whole range of ideas of the three temptations and the three vows – with the three temptations in Paradise and those in the wilderness being inseparable in reality – just as the three vows are also. Because one cannot be "chaste" without being "poor" and "obedient", just as one cannot renounce the divine ideal in favor of the ideal of the superman without at the same time falling into the region of trial (experimentation), where there is no immediate certainty, and into the region of the law of the Serpent formulated as follows: "You shall go upon your belly and you shall eat dust all the days of your life", i.e. the region where there is no Grace.

But what is the immediate consequence of resisting temptation? The Gospel account gives the answer here, as follows:-

"Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him".

This response belongs to the range of ideas and facts of the seventh Arcanum of the Tarot "The Chariot" whose card represents a man standing on a triumphal chariot drawn by two horses.

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Letter VII: Meditation on the seventh Major Arcanum of the Tarot - "THE CHARIOT" "LE CHARIOT"

Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.
(Matthew iv, 11)

When the unclean spirit has gone out of man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none he says: I will return to my house from whence I came.

And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order.

Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. (Luke xi, 24-26)

I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. (John v, 43)

Dear Unknown Friend,

Like the preceding arcana, the Arcanum "The Chariot" has a twofold aspect. It represents, from one side, he who - having triumphed over the three temptations - remains faithful to the vows of Obedience, Poverty and Chastity; and it represents, from another side, the danger of the fourth temptation, which is the most subtle and intimate temptation, and is the invisible synthesis of the three temptations: the spiritual temptation of the victorious through his victory itself. It is the temptation to act "in one's own name", to act as master instead of servant.

The seventh Arcanum is that of mastership understood in the sense of temptation as well as achievement. The three Gospel quotations which are found at the head of this Letter delineate the nature of the ideas here.

Paul MARTEAU says that the general and abstract meaning of the seventh Card is that it "represents setting in motion in seven states, i.e. in all domains" - ("Le Tarot de Marseille", Paris, 1949, p. 33), and it is exactly this that we have designated above as "mastership". For mastership is not the state of being moved, but rather that of being able to set in motion.

The Son of Man resisted being moved by the three temptations in the wilderness;

consequently, it is he who set in motion the forces which served him." Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him".

Here, again, is a fundamental law of sacred Magic. One could formulate it in the following way: That which is above being as that which is below, renunciation below sets in motion forces of accomplishment above and the renunciation of that which is above sets in motion forces of accomplishment below. What is the practical meaning of this law?

It is the following.

When you resist a temptation or renounce something desired below, you set in motion by this very fact forces of realization of that which corresponds above to that which you come to renounce below. It is this that the Master designates by the word "reward" when he says, for example, that it is necessary to guard against practicing righteousness before other people in order to gain their regard, "for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew vi,1). Reward is therefore the action that one sets in motion above by the renunciation of desire for things below. It is the "yes" from above corresponding to the "no" from below. And this correspondence constitutes a basis for magical realization and for a fundamental law of Christian esotericism or Hermeticism. Let us guard ourselves from taking it lightly, for here is given to us one of the principal keys of sacred Magic. It is not desire which bears magical realization, but rather the renunciation of desire (that you have formerly experienced, of course). For renunciation through indifference has no moral - and therefore no magical - value.

Desire, and then renounce — here we have the practical magical meaning of the "law" of reward. To say that one has to renounce what one desires amounts to saying that one has to practice the three sacred vows- Obedience, Poverty and Chastity. For the renunciation must be sincere in order for it to set in motion the forces of realization from above, and it cannot be so when it lacks the air, light and warmth of the sacred vows. It is necessary therefore to understand once and for all that there is no true sacred magic — nor mysticism, gnosis or Hermeticism- outside of the three sacred vows, and that true magical training is essentially only the practice of the three vows. Is this hard? No, it is easy, it is the "concentration without effort" which was considered in the first of these Letters.

Let us now consider the text of the Gospel account concerning what happened immediately after the three temptations. "Then the devil left him" (tote aphiesin auton ho diabolos) says the Gospel according to Matthew, but the Gospel according to Luke adds "for a time". Now, these additional words give rise to the supposition that again a trial or temptation— the fourth, which is the most subtle and intimate — is to come. And it is this which forms part of the teaching of the seventh Arcanum, which represents a crowned man standing on a triumphal chariot drawn by two horses.

"And behold, angels came ... to him" (kai idou angeloi proselthon), i.e. now they were able to approach him, since a "space" necessary for their descent became free. Why and how?

Angels (ἄγγελοι hoi angeloi, in Greek) are entities which move vertically, from above below and from below above. "To move" signifies for them "to change respiration", and

"distance" for them amounts to the number – and to the intensity of effort that it comprises – of changes from inhalation to exhalation. Thus, for example, when we say, "a distance of 300 kilometers from the earth", an angel would say, "three successive changes from normal respiration in the sphere of the angels". "To draw near" for angels signifies a change in respiration; "to be unable to draw near" means to say that the "atmosphere" of the sphere which they want to draw near to is such that they can no longer breathe there, and that they would "faint" if they were to enter this sphere.

This is why the angels were unable to approach the Son of Man during the time when the concentrated forces of terrestrial evolution – the forces of the "son of the Serpent" – were active. They "occupied", so to say, the space around the Son of Man, so that the angels were unable to breathe – and therefore they were unable to enter there without "fainting". But "immediately" that "the devil left him" (Luke) and the atmosphere changed, they <u>were able to</u> approach him, and did so.

One can add, by way of a corollary, that the "law of presence" delineated above gives us a strong reason for acknowledging the necessity of churches, temples and consecrated or holy places in general. There are certainly other reasons again, but this would suffice, even if there were no other reasons, for us to defend the protection of all sacred places. Let us therefore protect through our thoughts, words and deeds, all churches, every chapel and, lastly, every temple, where one prays, worships, meditates, and celebrates God and his servants!

"... And they ministered to him" (kai diekonoun auto). The plural "they" indicates to us that it is a matter here of t h r e e angels. Each temptation resisted corresponded to an angel charged with the special mission of reward and who rendered a special s e r v i c e.

What, therefore, were these services?

He had refused – he, being famished – to command stones to become bread; now, it was "the word which comes from the mouth of God", become bread, which the angel of Poverty served him.

He had refused to cast himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple; now, it was breath from the height of the throne of God that the angel of Chastity brought to him.

He had refused to accept the role of Superman – to be king of the world at the price of worshipping the ideal of the world of the Serpent; now, it was the royal crown of the world of God that the angel of Obedience presented him.

Just as the t h r e e M a g e s offered their presents to the new-born Child – gold, frankincense and myrrh – so did the three Angels each offer a present to the Master, after his Baptism in the Jordan and his Confirmation in the wilderness: the crown of gold, the breath of incense from the Throne of God and the divine word become food.

This is what happened <u>immediately</u> after the three temptations in the wilderness. This was the response from above to the threefold renunciation by the Son of Man below. But what was the effect of the vanquished temptations not only for the vanquisher himself and not only immediately, but also for the outside world of the so-called "four elements" and in

the course of time?

The effect here was mastership of the world of the elements, and what took place in the course of time was the seven archetypal miracles described in the Gospel according to John, i.e. the miracle at the wedding of Cana, the miracle of the healing of the nobleman's son, the miracle of the healing of the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda, the miracle of the multiplying of the loaves of bread (the feeding of the five thousand), the miracle of walking on the water, the miracle of the healing of the man born blind, and the miracle of the raising of Lazarus at Bethany. And to the manifestation of these seven aspects of mastership or "glory" there corresponds the revelation of the seven aspects of the Name of the Master: - "I am the true vine", "I am the way, the truth and the life", "I am the door", "I am the bread of life", "I am the good shepherd", "I am the light of the world" and "I am the resurrection and the life". This is the rainbow of seven colors of the manifestation of "glory" or mastership and also the octave of the seven tones of revelation of the "name" or mission of the Vanquisher of the three temptations. And this rainbow shone around the empty and somber place in the wilderness where these temptations took place.

The seven miracles of the Gospel according to John are, in their totality, the "glory" (doxa) or splendor of the victory of the three sacred vows over the three temptations. Here there is at the same time a beautiful piece of qualitative mathematics: the threefold good, when it prevails over the threefold evil, produces s e v e n f o l d good, while when the the threefold evil prevails over the threefold good, it produces only threefold evil. For the good is only qualitative, and when it is able to manifest itself, it manifests itself wholly, in its indivisible fullness. This is what the number seven is - fullness (pleroma) or, when it manifests itself - glory (doxa), which St. John speaks of when he says: "and we have beheld his glory" and "from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace" (John i, 14 and 16). And the first miracle, that of the wedding at Cana, was the beginning of the manifestation of this fullness or glory :-

> "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory (doxa); and his disciples believed in him" (John ii, 11)

"His disciples believed in him" means to say that they believed in his name, or his mission, which was revealed in its seven aspects by the seven "I AM" - sayings quoted above from the Gospel according to John.

Now, the effect of the Triumph over the Temptation in the wilderness was the manifestation of the seven aspects of mastership or "glory" (the seven miracles) and the revelation of the mission or "name" of the Master. And all this was nothing other than the manifestation of the glory of the Father through the Son, and the revelation of the name of the Father through the name of the Son.

But the possibility of the other "glory", i.e. the manifestation of mastership in one's own name, also exists. The words of the Master at the head of this Letter - "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive" (John v, 43) - state it clearly and experience in the domain of Occult,

Esoteric, Hermetic, Cabbalistic, Gnostic, Magical, Martinist, Theosophical, Anthroposophical, Rosicrucian, Templar, Masonic, Sufi, Yogistic movements, and other contemporary spiritual movements, supplies us with ample proof that the words of the Master have in no way lost their actuality, even in the domain of science and in movements of a social, or national, or semi-scientific nature. Because for what other reason do the Theosophists, for example, prefer the Himalayan Mahatmas, whose astral bodies through projection appear from a great distance (or who "precipitate" letters written in blue or red crayon), to the Master, who has never ceased to teach, inspire, illumine and heal, amongst us and near to us — in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, to name only the countries where there have been well-established cases of meetings with him — and who himself said:- "I am with you always, to the end of time" (Matthew xxviii,20)?

For what other reason does one seek a "guru" amongst the Hindu yogis or Tibetan lamas without giving oneself half a chance to seek for a teacher illumined through spiritual experience in our monasteries or spiritual orders, or among lay brothers and sisters who practice the Master's teaching and are perhaps quite near at hand?

And why do members of secret societies or orders of the Masonic type consider the Sacrament of Flesh and Blood of the Lord insufficient for the work of building the new-man, and why do they seek special rituals to supplement it or even to replace it?

Yes, all these questions fall under the heading of the words of the Master: "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me, if another comes in his own name, him you will receive." Why? Because for some the Superman has more attraction than the Son of Man, and because he promises them a career of increasing power, while the Son of Man offers only a career of foot-washing....

Dear Unknown Friend, do not interpret what I am saying in the sense that I am opposed or even hostile to the above-mentioned societies, fraternities, and movements of a spiritual and initiatory nature, nor in the sense that I am accusing them of an anti-Christian attitude. Do not attribute me with a lack of respect for the Mahatmas and gurus of India. It is a matter here only of the <u>purely psychological tendency</u> (that I have been able to observe something of everywhere) which prefers the ideal of the Superman to the ideal of the Son of Man. There is room to add, in order to do justice to the societies and fraternities mentioned, that if this tendency shows up all over the place at the core of these societies and fraternities, it is also so that it is everywhere combatted in a more or less effective way. There is always an opposition to this tendency, although this opposition is sometimes only that of a minority.

Be that as it may, the charioteer of the Arcanum "The Chariot" is the victor over trials, i.e the temptations, and if he is Master, then it is thanks to himself. He is alone, standing in his chariot; no one is present to applaud him or to pay homage to him; he has no weapons — the scepter that he holds not being a weapon. If he is master, his mastership was acquired in solitude and he owes it to the trials alone, and not to anyone or anything external to himself.

The victory achieved in solitude... what glory and what danger it comprises at one

and the same time! It is the only real glory, for it in no way depends on human favor and judgement; it is intrinsic glory - the real radiance of the aura become luminous. It is, however, at the same time the most real and the most serious spiritual danger which exists. "Pride" and "vaingloriousness", the traditional names which one gives to it, do not suffice to characterize it in an adequate way. It is more than this. It is, rather, a kind of mystical megalomania, where one deifies the regulating center of one's own being, one's Ego, and where one sees the divine only within oneself and becomes blind to the divine above and outside of oneself. The "Higher Self" is then experienced as the supreme and unique Self of the world, although it is only higher in relation to the ordinary, empirical self, and it is far from the supreme and unique being.... far from being God, in other words.

It would be as well, now, to dwell on the problem of identification of the self with the higher Self and of the higher Self with God.

C. G. JUNG who, after having explored the sexual or "Freudian" layer, and then that of the will-to-power or "Adlerian" layer, of the Unconscious (i.e. of the occult or latent consciousness) of the human being, encountered a spiritual (mystical, gnostic and magical) layer during the course of his clinical and psychotherapeutic experience. Instead of drawing back from it or extricating himself from it through a corrosive "explanation", he had the courage and honesty to set himself to the laborious study of the phenomenology of this layer of the Unconscious. Now this work proved fruitful. JUNG discovered here not only the causes of certain psychic disorders, but also the profound and intimate process that he designated as the "process of individuation", which is nothing other than the gradual birth of another self (Jung called it the "Self") higher to oneself or one's ordinary Ego. The discovery of the process of the "second birth" prompted him to extend the range of his exploratory work considerably, notably to include symbolism, mystery rituals and the comparative study of contemporary and ancient religions.

Now, this broadening of his field of exploration also proved fruitful. Jung's arrival at his discovery (which at first racked him, preventing him from speaking of it to a living soul for fifteen years) had its train of consequences, including the knowledge and description of some dangers or temptations belonging to the way of initiation and the process of individuation which corresponds to it. One of these dangers — which are at the same time trials or temptations — is that which Jung designated by the term "inflation", which signifies the state of consciousness of the self inflated to excess, and which is known in psychiatry in its extreme manifestation by the term "megalomania".

Therefore, here we are concerned with a range of psychic phenomena, which to begin with show up in relatively innocent forms — such as a high opinion of oneself which is not entirely justified, or the somewhat exaggerated desire to have one's own way — which become quite dangerous when they manifest as a disparaging negativity towards everyone... the faculties of appreciation, gratitude and worship being concentrated upon oneself; and which eventually signify a catastrophe that is rarely curable, when they reveal themselves as

obsession with easily recognizable illusions, or megalomania, pure and simple. Here, then, are the principal dangers of inflation: exaggerated importance attached to oneself, superiority complex tending towards obsession and, lastly, megalomania. The first degree signifies a practical task for work upon oneself; the second degree is a serious trial; while the third is a catastrophe.

What is it a question of in the process of inflation? – Let us look first at what JUNG himself says about it :-

> "The "superordinate personality" is the total man, i.e. man as he really is, not as he appears to himself. To this wholeness the unconscious psyche also belongs, which has its requirements and needs just as consciousness has" (p.223) – "I usually describe the "superordinate personality" as the "self", thus making a sharp distinction between the ego, which, as is well known, extends only as far as the conscious mind, and the whole of the personality, which includes the unconscious as well as the conscious component. The ego is thus related to the "self" as part to the whole. To that extent the self is superordinate. Moreover, the self is felt empirically not as subject but as object, and this by reason of its unconscious component, which can only come to consciousness indirectly, by way of projection." (C.G. JUNG and C. KERÉNYI, "Introduction to a Science of Mythology"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, London, 1951, pp. 223-224)

Now, this "way of projection" is living symbolism – traditional symbolism as well as symbolism manifesting itself in dreams, "active imagination" and visions. Dreams, when observed in a series (often running into several hundreds), show that they obey a kind of plan. They seem to relate to one another and to be subject in a profound sense to a common goal ... "... in the deepest sense ... they seem ... to be subordinated to a common goal, so that a long dream-series no longer appears as a senseless string of incoherent and isolated happenings, but resembles the successive steps in a planned and orderly process of development. I have called this unconsciousness process spontaneously expressing itself in the symbolism of a long dream-series the individuation process." (C.G. JUNG, "The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 8, London, 1972, pp. 289-290)

The process of individuation is "the spontaneous realization of the whole man" (ibid., p. 292). For the formula that is henceforth valuable for the notion of the soul is: "psyche = ego-consciousness + unconscious" (C.G. Jung, "The Practice of Psychotherapy", trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung", vol. 16, London, 1954, p. 90). -- With respect to the role of the unconscious in this formula, it is necessary to take account of the fact, principally, "that in every child consciousness grows out of the unconscious in the course of a few years, also that consciousness is always only a temporary state based on an optimum physiological performance and therefore regularly interrupted by phases of unconsciousness (sleep), and finally that the unconscious psyche not only possesses the longer lease of life but is continually present (i.e. it assures the continuity of being)." (ibid. p. 91)

Now, the process of individuation is that of the harmonization of the conscious self and the

unconscious in the psyche. But the "conscious and unconscious do not make a whole when one of them is suppressed and injured by the other." (C.G. Jung, "Conscious, Unconscious and Individuation", trsl. R.F.C. Hull, "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, vol. 9, part VI, London, 1959, p.288). It is a matter of a harmonization which is only realizable by way of the re-centering of the personality, i.e. the birth of a new center of the personality, which participates in the nature of the unconscious as well as in the conscious self – a center, in other words, where the unconscious is perpetually in transformation into consciousness. This is the aim of the process of "individuation", which is at the same time a stage of initiation.

The process of "individuation" operates, as we have said, by establishing a collaboration between the unconscious and the conscious. The domain of symbols affords such a collaboration and it is here, consequently, that it can begin. In the process of "individuation" one meets – or rather one awakens – the symbol-forces that JUNG designated, in consideration of their typical character, by the name "archetypes" (Archetypen). "The archetype – let us never forget this – is a psychic organ present in all of us. A bad explanation means a correspondingly bad attitude to this organ, which may thus be injured. But the ultimate sufferer is the bad interpreter himself. Hence the "explanation" should always be such that the functional significance of the archetype remains unimpaired, i.e. that an adequate and appropriate relationship between the conscious mind and the archetypes is insured. For the archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy ..... There is no "rational" substitute for the archetype any more than there is for the cerebellum or the kidneys." (C. G. JUNG and C. KERÉNYI, "Introduction to a Science of Mythology"; trsl. R.F.C. Hull, London, 1951, pp. 109-110)

Now, one must not take archetypes lightly. They are formidable psychic forces which can also invade, inundate and engulf consciousness. This is what happens in the case of the identification of consciousness with the archetype. Then it produces, more often than not, an identification with the role of the heroes (and, sometimes – when it is a matter of the archetype named "the wise old man" or "the great mother" – an identification with a cosmic figure). "At this stage there is usually another identification, this time with the hero, whose role is attractive for a variety of reasons. The identification is often extremely stubborn and dangerous to mental equilibrium. If it can be broken down and consciousness reduced to human proportions, the figure of the hero can gradually be differentiated into a symbol of the self." (ibid., p. 137)

And, let us add, if this does not succeed, the figure of the hero takes possession of consciousness. Then the "second identification" – or the "epiphany of the hero" – takes place.

"The epiphany of the hero (the second identification) shows itself in a corresponding inflation: the colossal pretension grows into a conviction that one is something extraordinary, or else the impossibility of the pretension ever being fulfilled only proves one's own inferiority, which is favorable to the role of the heroic sufferer (a negative inflation). In spite of their contrariety, both forms are identical, because unconscious

compensatory inferiority tallies with conscious megalomania, and unconscious megalomania with conscious inferiority (you never get one without the other). Once the reef of the second identification has been successfully circumnavigated, conscious processes can be cleanly separated from the unconscious, and the latter observed objectively. This leads to the possibility of an accommodation with the unconscious, and thus to a possible synthesis of the conscious and unconscious elements of knowledge and action. This in turn leads to a shifting of the center of personality from the ego to the self." (ibid., pp. 137-138)

This is the aim of the process of individuation.

Now, inflation is the principal risk that attends each person who seeks the experience of depth, the experience of what is occult, which lives and works behind the facade of phenomena of ordinary consciousness. Therefore, inflation constitutes the principal danger and trial for occultists, esotericists, magicians, gnostics and mystics. Monasteries and spiritual orders have always known this, thanks to the immense pillar of experience which they have accumulated over millennia in the domain of the profound life. This is why their whole spiritual practice is based on the cultivation of humility by such means as the practice of obedience, the examination of conscience and the reciprocal brotherly help of members of the community. Thus, if SABBATAI ZEVI (1625-1676) had been a member of a spiritual order with a discipline similar to that of Christian spiritual orders and monasteries, his illumination would never have led to his revealing himself (in 1648) to a group of disciples as the promised Messiah. Neither would he have had to become a Turk in order to save his life and continue his mission ("God has made me an Ishmaelite - Turk; he has commanded, and I have obeyed - the ninth day after my second birth", he wrote to his followers in Smyrna). Because he would have been spared positive inflation, just as he would have been spared the negative inflation of which Samuel GANDOR, his disciple, gives the following description:-

"It is said of Sabbatai ZEVI that for fifteen years he has been bowed down by the following affliction: he is pursued by a sense of depression which leaves him no quiet moment and does not even permit him to read, without his being able to say what is the nature of this sadness which has come upon him..." (Gershom G. Scholem, "Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism", London, 1955, p. 290)

The history of the illumined Cabbalist Sabbatai ZEVI is only an extreme case of the general dangers and trials which all practicing esotericists have to face. Indeed, Hargrave JENNINGS expresses this danger and trial in a successful way concerning the Rosicrucians:-

"They speak of all mankind as infinitely beneath them; their pride is beyond idea, although they are most humble and quiet in exterior. They glory in poverty, and declare that it is the state ordered for them; and this though they boast universal riches. They decline all human affections, or submit to them as advisable escapes only - appearance of loving obligations, which are assumed for convenient appearance, or for passing in a world which is composed of them, or of their supposal. They mingle

most gracefully in the society of women, with hearts wholly incapable of softness in this direction; while they criticize them with pity or contempt in their own minds as altogether another order of beings from men. They are most simple and deferential in their exterior; and yet the self-value which fills their hearts ceases its self-glorifying expansion only with the boundless skies... In comparison with the Hermetic adepts, monarchs are poor, and their greatest accumulations are contemptible. By the side of the sages, the most learned are mere dolts and blockheads... Thus, towards mankind they are negative; towards everything else, positive; self-contained, self-illuminated, self-everything; but always prepared (nay, enjoined) to do good, wherever possible or safe. To this immeasurable exaltation of themselves, what standard of measure, or what appreciation, can you apply? Ordinary estimates fail in the idea of it. Either the state of these occult philosophers is the height of sublimity, or it is the height of absurdity".... (Hargrave JENNINGS, "The Rosicrucians. Their Rites and Mysteries", London-New York, 1887, pp.30-31)

Let us say absurd as well as sublime, because inflation is always simultaneously sublime and absurd. This is what Eliphas LÉVI ("Dogme et rituel de la haute magie"; trsl. A.E. Waite, "Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual", London, 1968, p.10) says about it :-

"There is also a science which confers on man powers apparently superhuman. They are enumerated thus in a Hebrew manuscript of the XVIth century:

...Aleph - He beholds God face to face, without dying, and converses familiarly with the seven genii who command the entire celestial army.

Beth - He is above all griefs and all fears.

Ghimel - He reigns with all heaven and is served by all hell.

Daleth - He rules his own health and life and can influence equally those of others.

Hé - He can neither be surprised by misfortune nor overwhelmed by disasters, nor can he be conquered by his enemies.

Vav - He knows the reason of the past, present and future.

Zain - He possesses the secret of the resurrection of the dead and the key of immortality.." ... etc.

Is it a matter here of a program or of actual experience? If it is experience, it is one of inflation pushed very far. If it is a program, he who takes its realization seriously cannot fail to fall prey to inflation, be it positive (superiority complex) or negative (inferiority complex).

Whatever it may be, the experience or program of this Hebrew manuscript of the XVIth century quoted by Eliphas LÉVI shows a remarkable similarity to the experience of John CUSTANCE, described by him in his book "Wisdom, Madness and Folly: the Philosophy of a Lunatic" (London, 1951, p.51). It is as follows:- "I feel so close to God, so inspired by His Spirit that in a sense I am God. I see the future, plan the Universe, save mankind; I am utterly and completely immortal; I am even male and female. The whole Universe, animate and inanimate, past, present and future, is within me. All nature and life, all spirits, are cooperating and connected with me; all things are possible. I am in a sense

identical with all spirits from God to Satan. I reconcile Good and Evil and create light, darkness, worlds, universes..."

The state described by John Custance is characteristic of that of acute mania, and the author himself in no way denies it. But would he still look at it in this way, one can ask, if he knew that his experience is found described exactly in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, which says:

"He who has found and awakened to the Soul that has entered this conglomerate whole – he is the maker of everything, for he is the creator of all; the world is his: indeed, he is the world itself." (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.13; trsl. R. Hume, "The Thirteen Principal Upanishads", Oxford, 1962, p. 142)

Can one say with certainty that this text quoted from the Upanishads is based on an entirely different experience to that of John Custance?

Thirty-eight years ago I knew a tranquil man of mature age who taught English at the YMCA in the capital of a Baltic country. Now, he revealed to me one day that he had attained a spiritual state which manifests itself through "the eternal gaze" and which is that of consciousness of the identity of Self with the Eternal Reality of the world. The past, present and future – seen from the pedestal of eternity, where his consciousness had its abode – were an open book for him. He had no more problems, not because he had resolved them, but because he had attained the state of consciousness where they disappeared, having become of no importance. Because problems belong to the domain of motion in time and space; he who transcends this and arrives at the realm of eternity and infinity, where there is neither movement nor change, is free of problems.

When he spoke to me of these things, his beautiful blue eyes rayed out sincerity and certainty. But this radiance gave way to a dark and angry look as soon as I raised the question of the value of the "subjective feeling of eternity" when one is not aware of or one is unable objectively to do something more towards helping humanity, be it in spiritual (or other) progress, or in the alleviation of spiritual, psychic and bodily suffering. He did not forgive me this question and he turned his back on me, which was my last impression of him in this world (he made his way to India, where soon after he died as victim of an epidemic).

I recount this episode in my life only so that you may know, dear Unknown Friend, when and how the very serious problem of the forms of, and the dangers of, spiritual megalomania were awakened in me, and how I owe it to this objective experience that I began work on this problem, some of the outcomes of which I am in the process of showing.

Spiritual megalomania is as old as the world. Its origin is found well beyond the terrestrial world, according to the millennial-old tradition concerning the fall of Lucifer.

The prophet Ezekiel gives a most moving description of this:

"You were the signet of perfection,
You were full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.
You were in Eden, the garden of God;
You were covered with every kind of precious stone.
Sardonyx, topaz, and diamond,
Chrysolite, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, carbuncle, emerald, and gold,
With which you were adorned, and which were prepared for you on the day that you were created.
You were a guardian Cherubim, with outspread wings;
I placed you, and you were, on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire .....
Your heart was proud because of your beauty,
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor.
I cast you to the ground,
I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you...." (Ezekiel xxviii, 12-17)

Here is the higher (i.e. celestial) origin of inflation, superiority complex and megalomania. And since "that which is below is as that which is above", it is repeated below in human earthly life from century to century and generation to generation. It is repeated above all in the lives of those human beings who are detached from the ordinary earthly setting and the state of consciousness belonging to it, and who transcend it, be it in the sense of height, in the sense of breadth, or, lastly, in the sense of depth. He who aspires to a plane <u>higher</u> than that of the terrestrial setting risks becoming haughty; he who seeks <u>breadth</u> beyond the normal circle of earthly duties and pleasures risks considering himself to be more and more important; he who is in search of the <u>depth</u> beneath the surface of the phenomena of terrestrial life, runs the greatest risk: that of inflation, of which C.G. JUNG speaks.

The abstract metaphysician, who arranges worlds according to an order that he has chosen, can lose all interest for the particular and for the individual, in such a way that he comes to consider human beings to be almost as insignificant as insects. He regards them only from above. Seen from his metaphysical height, they lose all proportion and become for him small or almost insignificant – while, he, the metaphysician, is great, since he participates in great metaphysical things, which clothe him in grandeur.

The reformer who <u>wants</u> to correct or to save humanity easily falls victim to the temptation of considering himself as the active center of passive circle of humanity. He feels himself as the bearer of a mission of universal significance; therefore he feels himself to be more and more important.

The practicing occultist, esotericist or Hermeticist (if he is not practicing he is only a metaphysician or reformer) experiences the higher forces which work beyond his consciousness and which make their entrance there. At what price? -- Either at the price of worshipping on his knees — or otherwise at the price of the identification of self with these higher forces, which results in megalomania.

One speaks often of the dangers of occultism. Black magic is usually the supreme danger against which the beginner is put on guard by the "masters"; others (above all those who know more or less about medicine) see it as disorders of the nervous system.

But experience during 43 years of practical occultism (or esotericism) has taught me that the danger of occultism is neither black magic nor nervous disorder — at least, these dangers are met no more often amongst occultists than amongst politicians, artists, psychologists, believers and agnostics. I am not able to cite by name any black magician amongst the occultists that I know, whereas it would not be too difficult to name some politicians who, for example, have nothing to do with occultism — and would even be hostile to it — but whose impact and influence agree very well with the classical concept of that of the "black magician". Indeed, is it difficult to name politicians who have exercised a deadly, suggestive influence on the popular masses, blinding them and inciting them to acts of cruelty, injustice and violence, of which each individual, taken separately, would be incapable? And who, through their semi-magical influence, have deprived individuals of their freedom and rendered them possessed? And — is not this action to deprive men of their moral freedom and to render them possessed the aim and very essence of black magic?

No, dear Unknown Friend, occultists — including those amongst them who practice ceremonial magic — are neither masters nor disciples of black magic. Truth to tell, they are amongst those who have least of all in common with it. It is true that they — above all the adepts of ceremonial magic — often fall prey to illusions and mislead themselves and others, but is this black magic? Besides, where can one find a class of human beings who never make mistakes? Even Doctor Faust — who made a pact with the devil (and this concerns all "pact-makers" of this kind, ancient and modern) — was only the naive victim of a prank on the part of Mephistopheles (who is a rogue well-known to all those who have knowledge of the "occult world"), because how can you "sell" something which in no way belongs to you!? It is his soul which would have been able to sell Doctor Faust, but never would Doctor Faust be able to give away his soul, however solemn his pact was and no matter whether he wrote and signed with blood or with ordinary ink.

It is Mephistopheles' way of giving a lesson to those who want to be supermen; he brings to light the puerility of their pretensions. And while wholly deploring the naivety of poor Doctor Faust, one is led to consider the "method of roguishness" of Mephistopheles as, in the last analysis, salutary. Because what Mephistopheles does (and other examples of this method of a more recent date could be cited) is to show the ridiculousness and absurdity of the aspirations

and pretensions of so-called "supermen". "Von allern Geistern, die verneinen,
Ist mir der Schalk am wenigsten zur Last" ("Of all Spirits who deny, the rogue is the least burden to me") says God concerning Mephistopheles in Goethe's "Faust" ("Prologue in Heaven", Faust, part I).

Let us therefore not condemn the rogue of the spiritual world, and above all let us not be afraid of him. Nor let us condemn Doctor Faust, our brother, by accusing him of black magic – it is, rather, childish credulity of which he can be accused, if he must be accused. In any case, he was one hundred times more innocent with respect to mankind than our contemporaries who have invented the nuclear bomb ... as good scientists and citizens.

No, neither black magic nor nervous disorders constitute the special dangers of occultism. Its principal danger – of which, however, it has no monopoly – is designated by the three terms: superiority complex, inflation, megalomania.

In fact, an occultist (who is not a beginner) who has not attained this moral illness, or who has not at some time in the past undergone it, is rare. The tendency to megalomania shows up all over the place among occultists. Decades of personal relationships, as well as reading occult literature, have taught me this. There are many levels of this moral defect. It manifests itself at first as self-assurance and a certain informality with which one speaks of higher and sacred things. Then it expresses itself as "knowing better" and "knowing all", i.e. as the attitude of a master towards everyone. Lastly, it manifests as implicit or even explicit infallibility.

I do not want to cite passages from occult literature, nor to name names, nor to mention biographical facts concerning known occultists, in order to prove or illustrate this diagnosis. It would not be difficult for you, dear Unknown Friend, to find them yourself in abundance. What my intention is here is to refute the false accusations concerning occultism, on the one hand, and on the other hand to show up the real danger that occultism presents – so that one is put on guard against it.

But what should one do against this danger, in order to guard one's moral well-being? The ancient saying "O r a et l a b o r a" ("pray and work") constitutes the only answer that I have been able to find. Worship and work constitute the only curative as well as prophylactic remedy that I know against megalomaniacal illusions. It is necessary to worship what is above us and it is necessary to participate in human effort in the domain of objective facts in order to be able to hold in check the illusions concerning what one is and what one is capable of. For whoever is aware of raising his prayer and meditation to the level of pure worship will always be conscious of the distance which separates (and at the same time unites) the worshipper and the worshipped. Therefore he will not be tempted to worship himself, which is in the last analysis the cause of megalomania. He will always have in sight the difference between himself and the worshipped. He will not confuse what he is with what the worshipped being is.

On the other hand, he who works, i.e. who takes part in human effort, with a view to objective and verifiable results, will not easily fall prey to illusion with respect to what

he is capable of. Thus, for example, a practicing doctor inclined to overestimate his power of healing will soon learn to know the real limits of his ability through experience of his failures.

Jacob BOEHME was a shoemaker, and was illumined. When he had had the experience of illumination (.. "..ist mir die Pforte eröffnet worden, dass ich in einer Viertelstunde mehr gesehen und gewusst habe, als wenn ich wäre viel Jahr auf hohen Schulen gewesen..." ... " ..the Door became opened to me, so that in a quarter of an hour I observed and knew more than if I had attended a university for many years..." he wrote in a letter to the tax collector Lindner), where he "recognized the Being of Beings, the firmament and the abyss" ("Denn ich sah und erkannte das Wesen aller Wesen, den Grund und Ungrund" - same letter), he in no way concluded from it that he, in so far as he was a shoemaker, could henceforth do more than his colleagues in the trade, or that he himself could do more than before his illumination. On the other hand, through his illumination he learned to know the greatness of God and the world (.." .. dessen ich mich hoch verwunderte, wusste nicht wie mir geschah, und darüber mein Herz ins Lob Gottes wendete." ".. of which I was highly astounded, without knowing how it happened to me, and thereupon my heart turned to praise of God" - same letter)

and this filled him with worship ("thereupon my heart turned to praise of God").

Therefore, it was the work of his trade and the worship of God which protected the moral well-being of Jacob Boehme. And I allow myself to add here that my experience in the domain of esotericism has taught me that what was salutary in Boehme's case is also so, without exception, regarding all those who aspire to supersensible experiences.

Worship and work - " O r a et l a b o r a" -- therefore constitute the "conditio sine qua non" for practical esotericism in order to hold in check the tendency towards megalomania. This is in order to hold it in check, yet in order to obtain immunity from this moral illness, more than is necessary. One has to have the real experience of concretely meeting a being higher than oneself. I mean by "concretely meeting" neither the feeling of "higher Self", nor the more or less vague feeling of the "presence of a higher entity", nor even the experience of a "flood of inspiration" which fills one with life and light - no, what I mean by "concretely meeting" is nothing other than a true and really concrete meeting, i.e. face to face. It can be spiritual - face to face in vision - or more physically concrete. Thus, St. Teresa of Avila (in order to cite only one of many known examples) met the Master, conversed with Him, asked and received from Him advice and instruction on an objective spiritual plane (yes, spirituality is not exclusively subjective - it can also be objective). And certainly PAPUS and his group of occultist friends met Monsieur Philip of LYONS on the physical plane. Here are two examples of the concrete meeting that I mean.

Now, he who has had the experience of a concrete meeting with a higher being (a saint or righteous individual, an angel or another hierarchical being, the Virgin Mary,

the Master...) becomes through this very fact immune with respect to the tendency towards megalomania. The experience of having been face to face with a Great One necessarily comprises complete healing and immunity from any tendency towards megalomania. No human being who has seen and heard will be able to make an idol of himself. More than this: the true and ultimate criterion for the reality of these so-called "visionary" experiences, i.e. with respect to their authenticity or falsity, is given in the moral effect of these experiences, notably whether they make the recipient more humble or more pretentious. The experience of her meetings with the Master made St. TERESA more and more humble. The experience on the terrestrial plane of the meeting with Monsieur PHILIP also made PAPUS and his occultist friends more humble. Now, these two experiences — quite different though they are with respect to subject and object — were authentic. Neither Papus was thereby mistaken about the spiritual greatness of he who he recognized as his "spiritual master", nor was St. Teresa any less mistaken about the reality of the Master, whom she saw and heard speak.

Dear Unknown Friend, read the Bible and you will find there a great number of examples of this law, which may be expressed as follows: - authentic experience of the Divine makes one humble; he who is not humble has not had authentic experience of the Divine. Take the apostles who "saw and heard" the Master and the prophets who "saw and heard" the God of Israel — you will not find among them any trace of tendencies towards "pride" such as you can certainly find among many gnostic teachers who (consequently) had not "seen and heard".

But if it is true that it is necessary to have "seen and heard" in order to thoroughly learn the lesson of humility, what is there to say about people who are "naturally" humble and who have not "seen and heard"?

Without prejudice to other good and valuable answers, the answer which seems right to me is that all those who are humble have certainly seen and heard — no matter where or when, and no matter whether they remember or not. Humility can be the result of the real (i.e. non-intellectual) memory of the soul of the spiritual experience prior to birth, or it can be due to memory of nocturnal experience undergone during sleep and which remains in the domain of the unconscious or, lastly, it can be the effect of experience that is present consciously or unconsciously but is unacknowledged by oneself or others. For humility, like charity, is not a natural quality of human nature. Its origins can in no way be found in the domain of natural evolution, since it is not possible to conceive of it as the fruit of the "struggle for existence", i.e. natural selection and the survival of the fittest at the expense of the weak. Because the school of the struggle for existence does not produce humble people; it produces only strugglers and fighters of every kind. Humility is therefore a quality which must be due to the action of G r a c e, i.e. it must be a gift from above. Now, the "concrete meetings, face to face" of which it is a question here are always, without exception, events due to Grace, being meetings where a higher

being voluntarily draws near to a lower being. The meeting which made SAUL, the Pharisee, into PAUL, the Apostle, was not due to his efforts; it was an act of the One whom he met. It is the same with all meetings "face to face" with higher beings. Our part is only "to seek", "to knock" and "to pray", but the decisive act comes from above.

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Let us now return to the Arcanum "The Chariot", whose traditional meaning is "victory, triumph, success".

"This meaning -- says J. MAXWELL ("Le Tarot", Paris, 1933, p.87) - is derived naturally from the bearing of the personage (the charioteer), and presents no difficulty". Now, there is all the same a difficulty that it presents, namely that of answering the question: Does this card signify a warning or an ideal, or rather both at once?

I am inclined to see in all the Arcana of the Tarot simultaneously both warnings and aims to be attained - at least, this is what I have learned through forty years of study and meditation on the Tarot.

Thus "the Magician" is a warning against the intellectual jugglery of the metaphysician, heedless of experience, and against charlatancy of every kind - and at the same time it teaches "concentration without effort" and the use of the method of analogy.

"The Papesse" warns us of the dangers of gnosticism in teaching the discipline of true Gnosis.

"The Empress" evokes the dangers of mediumship and magic in revealing to us the mysteries of Sacred Magic.

"The Emperor" warns us of the will-to-power and teaches us the power of the Cross.

"The Pope" confronts us with the humanistic cult of personality and the magical pentagram in which this culminates, and opposes to this Holy Poverty, Obedience to the Divine, and the Magic of the Five Wounds.

"The Lover" warns us of the three temptations and teaches us the three sacred vows.

"The Chariot", lastly, warns us of the danger of megalomania and <u>teaches us the real triumph</u> achieved by the Self.

The real Triumph achieved by the Self. This means to say the successful outcome of the "process of individuation", according to C.G. JUNG, or the successful outcome of the work of true liberation, which is the fruit of c a t h a r s i s or purification and which precedes p h o t i s m o s or illumination, and which is followed by h e n o s i s or union, according to the occidental initiation tradition.

The "triumpher" on the Chariot can therefore signify either a sick person

suffering from megalomania or a man who has passed through catharsis or purification, the first of the three stages on the way of Initiation.

The thesis that I am advancing here is this: that, just as with all the other cards of the Arcana of the Tarot, the card of arcanum VII also expresses a double meaning. The personage on card VII signifies at one and the same time the "triumpher" and the Triumpher, the megalomaniac and the integrated man, master of himself.

The integrated man, master of himself, conqueror in all trials – who is he?

It is he who holds in check the four temptations – i.e. the three temptations in the wilderness described in the Gospels as well as the temptation which synthesizes them: the temptation of "pride", the center of the triangle of temptations – and who is, therefore, master of the four elements which compose the vehicle of his being: fire, air, water and earth. Master of the four elements – that is to say: creative being in clear, fluid and precise thought; creativity, clarity, fluidity and precision being the manifestations of the four elements in the domain of thought. It means to say, moreover, that he has a warm, large, tender and faithful heart – warmth, magnanimity, sensitivity and faithfulness being the manifestations of the four elements in the domain of feeling. There is, lastly, to add that he has ardor ("man of desire"), fullness, flexibility and stability in his will where the four elements manifest themselves as intensity, scope, adaptability and firmness. To summarize, one can say that a master of the four elements is a man of initiative, who is serene, mobile and firm. He represents the four natural virtues of Catholic theology – prudence, strength, temperance and justice; or rather Plato's four cardinal virtues – wisdom, courage, temperance and justice; or yet again the four qualities of SANKARACHARYA – viveka (discernment), vairagya (serenity), the "six jewels" of just conduct, and the desire for deliverance. Whatever the formulation may be of the four virtues in question, it is always a matter of the four elements or projections of the sacred name: יהוה – the Tetragrammaton, in human nature.

The four columns supporting the canopy on the chariot drawn by two horses, in the card of Arcanum VII, therefore signify the Four elements taken in a vertical sense, i.e. in their analogous meaning through the three worlds – the spiritual world, the soul world and the physical world.

And what is signified by the canopy itself that the four columns support?

The function of a canopy, taken as a material object, is to protect the person who is found beneath it. It therefore serves as a roof. Taken in its spiritual sense, at which one arrives by way of analogy, the canopy above the man wearing a yellow royal crown expresses two contrary things: that the crowned man is a megalomaniac in the condition of

"splendid isolation", separated from Heaven by the canopy, or else that the crowned man is an initiate in the mystery of spiritual well-being and that he does not identify himself with Heaven, being conscious of the difference which exists between himself and that which is above him. In other words, the canopy indicates the facts and truths underlying humility as well as megalomania. Humility, being the law of spiritual health, implies consciousness of the difference and distance between the center of human consciousness and the center of divine consciousness. He has a "skin" – or a canopy, if you wish – in his consciousness (just as the human body has a skin), which separates the human from the Divine, at the same time uniting them. This "spiritual skin" protects the spiritual well-being of man by not allowing him to identify himself ontologically with God, or to say "I am God" (cf. Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10: "aham brahmasmi" = "I am Brahma"), but at the same time allowing him the relationship of breathing, coming together and separating (which is never alienation!), which together constitute the life of love. The life of love consists of coming together and separating always with the consciousness present of non-identity: this is analogous to the process of breathing which consists of inhalation and exhalation. Is this not found expressed in an unparalleled way in the extract from Psalm 43, which is the sixth phrase in the Mass: "Emitte lucem tuam, et veritatem tuam: ipsa me deduxerunt, et adduxerunt in montem sanctum tuum, et in tabernacula tua"? ("Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me, let them bring me to thy holy hill and to thy tabernacles"). Yes, the light of your presence (drawing near) and the truth that I receive in me – through reflection (separating), this leads us towards the tabernacles.

Tabernacles... are these not tents, baldachins, canopies under which man is united in love with the Divine, without identifying himself with it or being absorbed by it? Aren't these tabernacles made of the "skin of humility", which alone protects us against the danger of killing love through ontological identification, i.e. the identification of the human being with divine being ("this soul is God" – "ayam atma brahma", Mandukya Upanishad, 2; "consciousness is God" – "pragnanam brahma", Aitareya Upanishad, 5.3) – and therefore protects us from the danger of spiritual megalomania (i.e. from arrogating to ourselves the very being of God instead of his image?

There are three forms of mystical experience: the experience of union with Nature, that of union with the transcendental human Self, and that of union with God. The first kind of experience is that of the obliteration of the differentiation between the individual's psychic life and surrounding Nature. It is this which Lévy-BRUHL calls "mystical participation", which notion he coined while studying the psychology of primitive peoples. This

notion designates the state of consciousness where the separation between the conscious subject and the object of the outside world disappears, and where subject and object become one. This kind of experience underlies not only shamanism and the totemism of the primitives but also the so-called "mythogenous" consciousness, which is the source of natural myths, as well as the ardent desire of poets and philosophers for union with Nature (e.g. Empedocles threw himself into the crater of the volcano on Mount Etna in order to unite himself with the elements of Nature). The effect of peyote, mescalin, hashish, alcohol, etc., can sometimes (but not always, and not with everyone!) produces states of consciousness analogous to that of "mystical participation". The characteristic trait of this form of experience is i n t o x i c a t i o n, i.e. the temporary fusion of oneself with forces exterior to one's self-consciousness. The Dionysian o r g i e s of antiquity were based on the experience of "sacred intoxication" due to the obliteration of the differentiation between self and non-self.

The second form of mystical experience is that of the transcendental Self. It consists in separating the ordinary empirical self from the higher Self, which is above all motion and all that which belongs to the domain of space and time. The higher Self is therefore experienced as immortal and free.

If "Nature mysticism" is characterized by intoxication, that of the Self, in contrast, has the characteristic trait of "progressively coming to one's senses", with the aim of complete sobriety. A philosophy based on the mystical experience of the Self, which represents it in the purest way and is least distorted by the addition of hazardous intellectual speculations, is that of the Indian school of Sankya. There the individual purusha is experienced in its separation from prakriti (i.e. all movement, space and time) as immortal and free. Although the same experience is found at the basis of the Vedanta philosophy, its followers are not satisfied with the immediate experience which which teaches nothing more, and nothing less, than that the true Self of man is immortal and free, but they add the postulate that the higher Self is God ("ayam atma brahma" – "this soul is God", Mandukya Upanishad, 2). The Sankya philosophy, in contrast, remains within the limits of the experience of the higher Self as such and in no way denies the plurality of purushas (i.e. the plurality of immortal and free higher Egos), nor does it raise the individual purusha to the dignity of the Absolute – which has resulted in it being considered an atheistic philosophy. It is so, if one understands by "atheist" the frank confession: I have not had experience of anything higher than the immortal and free Ego; abiding by the experience, what can I say in good faith? Sankya is not a religion and therefore does not merit being classed as "atheistic" any more than, for example, the modern psychological school of Jung does. On the other hand, can it be considered as proof of belief in God to

attribute to the higher Self of man the dignity of the Absolute?

The third sort of mystical* experience is that of the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the God of St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross in the Christian tradition, the God of the Bhagavad-Gita, Ramanuja, Madhva and Caitanya in the Hindu tradition. Here it is a matter of union with God in love, which implies a substantial duality being essentially at one.

This experience has as its principal characteristic trait the synthesis of the intoxication of Nature mysticism and the sobriety of mysticism of the higher Self. The term coined by tradition to express the state where ardent enthusiasm and profound peace manifest themselves simultaneously is that of "beatitude" or "beatific vision" (beatitudo, visio beatifica). Beatific vision implies the duality of the seer and the seen, on the one hand, and their union or intrinsic oneness in love, on the other hand. This is why this term expresses in a wonderfully clear and precise way the essence of theistic mystical experience: the meeting of the soul with God, face to face, in love. And this experience is all the more elevated the more complete the differentiation is, and the more perfect the union is. For this reason the Holy Cabbala puts at the center of spiritual experience that of the Holy Face (A r i c h - A n p h i n) of the Ancient of Days, and this is also why it teaches that the supreme experience of the human being – as well as the highest form of death for a mortal – is attained when God embraces (embrasse) the human soul.

> "And when Abraham our father gazed, he looked, saw, delved, understood, engraved, carved, permuted and depicted, and he was successful. And the Master of all ('a d o n h a k o l), Blessed be He, revealed Himself to him, and took him in His bosom, kissed (embrassa) him on the head, and called him, "My beloved"..." ("Sefer Yetzirah The Book of Creation: in theory and practice", vi,4, the short version; trsl. Aryeh Kaplan, York Beach, 1990, p.267)

says the S E P H E R Y e t z i r a h. And St. John of the Cross spoke of his experiences of the divine Presence in the tabernacles of love only in the language of love.

The three forms of mystical experience have their hygienic laws, or their "tabernacles" or "skins". They fall under the law of temperance or measure. Otherwise the rage of acute mania, megalomania and complete alienation from the world (ἰδιοτία) menace, respectively, their adepts. The breast-plate, the canopy and the crown are the three symbols for the salutary measures pertaining to the domains of experience of Nature mysticism, human mysticism and divine mysticism.

Now, the "triumpher" of Arcanum VII wears a breast-plate, stands under a canopy and is crowned. This is why he does not lose himself in Nature, why he does not lose God in the experience of his higher Self and why he does not lose the world in experiencing the love of

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* The term "mystical" used here comprises mystical experience proper and gnostic experience, as united.

God. He holds in check the dangers of rage, megalomania and exaltation. He is sane.

The "triumpher" of Arcanum VII is the true adept of Hermeticism, i.e. an adept of mysticism, gnosis and magic – divine, human and natural. He is not running; he stands upright. He is not seated, deep in meditation; he holds a scepter which serves him to bridle the two horses, one blue and one red, which draw his chariot. He is not absent, plunged into exalted ecstasy; he is on his way and he goes forward, standing upright all the while in his vehicle. The two horses, the one blue and the other red, have relieved him of the effort of walking. The instinctive forces of "yes" and "no", attraction and repulsion, arterial blood and venous blood, trust and mistrust, faith and doubt, life and death and, lastly, "right" and "left" – symbolized by the pillars of J a c h i n and B o a z – have become motive forces in him, obedient to his scepter. They serve him voluntarily as he is their true master. He trusts them and they trust him – this is mastership according to Hermeticism. For in Hermeticism mastership does not signify the subjugation of the lower by the higher, but rather the alliance of superconsciousness, consciousness and instinctive – or sub-consciousness. This is the Hermetic ideal of p e a c e in the microcosm – the prototype of peace within a humanity divided into races, nations, classes and beliefs.

This peace is equilibrium or justice, where each particular force playing its part in the life of the microcosm is assigned its rightful place in the life of the entire psychic and physical organism.

Now, equilibrium or justice is the subject of the following arcanum, of Arcanum VIII, "J u s t i c e", which will be the theme of the next Letter.

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Summarizing the p r a c t i c a l teaching (for it is always the practical aspect which occupies us in the first place) of the seventh Arcanum of the Tarot, one can say that the "triumpher" is a "convalescent", i.e. that the "triumpher" has triumphed over sickness or imbalance – spiritual, psychic and physical – which means to say that he is at the same time "righteous" or the one who has triumphed over the four temptations by remaining faithful to the three sacred vows as well as to their root and synthesis: humility. In turn, this means to say that he is a "liberated man" or "master". He is free of astrological "planetary" influences – rediscovered in our time by C.G. JUNG in the guise of the "collective unconscious" with its (seven!) principal psychic forces or "archetypes". He is master of the "archetypes" (astrological "planetary influences", or "archontes" of the ancient gnostics), i.e. the "shadow", the "persona", the "animus", the "anima", the "wise old man" or "father", the "mother" and even the "self", above which is the "self of selves" or God. – In other words, he holds in check the influences, in so far as they are baleful, of the Moon, Mercury, Mars, Venus, Jupiter,

Saturn and even the Sun, above which he knows there exists the "Sun of Suns" or G o d. He is not <u>without</u> the planets, archetypes or archontes (just as he is not without earth, water, air and fire) for these are what comprise that which is called the "astral body" (or psychic body) in occultism. The psychic body is a b o d y in so far as it is composed of unconscious, collective or "planetary" psychic forces. It is the astrological planets (or Jung's archetypes) which form the "stuff" of the psychic or astral body. The "triumpher" of the seventh Arcanum is therefore the master of the astral body.

Master of the astral body. Master of the <u>seven forces</u> which it comprises, holding them in equilibrium.

What is the e i g h t h force which puts the s e v e n forces of the astral body in equilibrium?

It is the e i g h t h A r c a n u m of the T a r o t, "<u>Justice</u>", which gives the answer to this question.

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Meditations on the Tarot
Letters VIII - XII

A Journey into Christian Hermeticism

Letter VIII :-

Meditation on the eighth Major Arcanum of the Tarot : "JUSTICE" "LA JUSTICE"

"The Son and the Spirit – this is all that is granted to us. With respect to absolute unity or the Father, no one has been able to see him nor will see him in this world, if this is not within the octenary – which is, in fact, the only way whereby one could attain to him."

(Louis Claude de SAINT-MARTIN, Des nombres, Nice, 1946, xiv.)

Quis custodiat custodes?
(Who will guard the guards? ... The fundamental problem of jurisprudence)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The seventh Arcanum taught us how inner equilibrium is attained; the teaching of the eighth Arcanum is how this equilibrium, once reached, is maintained; and the ninth Arcanum shows us the method or the way which opens up to he who knows how to attain and maintain equilibrium. In other words, the seventh Arcanum tells us how to attain equilibrium (or health), the eighth Arcanum shows us the "mechanism" of microcosmic and macrocosmic equilibrium and the ninth Arcanum teaches us the "way of peace" or the "middle way" – that of balanced spiritual development – which is proper to Hermeticism, taken as the synthesis of Mysticism, Gnosis, Magic and Science.

The Card (of the VIIIth Arcanum) represents a woman seated on a yellow seat between two pillars, dressed in a red tunic and covered with a blue mantle. She holds a yellow sword and a yellow balance in her hands. On her head she wears a three-part tiara mounted by a crown.

Now, the totality of the Card evokes the idea of Law interposed between the free action of the individual will and the essence of being. Man can act from his own free will – Law reacts to his action through visible and invisible effects. But behind this reaction is found the essential ground of ultimate Reality (the "ens realissimum" of St. Thomas Aquinas), which confers universality, regularity and immutability to the reactions of Law. Law is interposed between the freedom of man and the freedom of God. She is seated between two pillars: that of Will (Jachin) and that of Providence (Boaz). She does not act; she can only react. This is why she is represented as a woman and not as a man. The crown which she wears indicates that she derives her dignity and mission from above – From the supreme Being, from Providence. The balance and the sword that she holds in her hands indicate what she guards (equilibrium) and how she guards it (the sanction of equilibrium) in the domain of the free will of individuals. Thus she says: "I am seated on the seat which is between the individual will of beings and the universal Will of the supreme Being. I am the Guardian of Equilibrium between the individual and the universal. I have the power to re-establish it each time that it is violated. I am Order, Health, Harmony, Justice."

It is the balance which indicates equilibrium – or order, health, harmony and justice – and it is the sword which signifies the power to re-establish it each time

that the individual will sins against the universal will.

This is the general meaning of the Card which, so to say, captures our attention from the very beginning of our meditation on the eighth Arcanum. Yet the general meaning — although many consider it as the goal of their efforts towards knowledge — is only the antechamber to the Hermetic meaning. For this latter does not lie in the generality obtained by the method of abstraction, but rather in the depth obtained by the method of penetration. The general answers obtained by means of abstraction are, in reality, only so many questions and tasks assigned for penetration. Because the more a general idea is abstract, the more superficial it is. The most general and most abstract idea which exists in philosophy is that of the "A b s o l u t e" (cf. HEGEL), but it is at the same time the most superficial idea in the world. In signifying all, it expresses nothing. You can certainly die — and even live — for God, but you would never die as a martyr for the Absolute. Because to die for the Absolute amounts to dying for nothing. The idea of the Absolute is only a shadow of shadows, whilst the living God is the prototype of prototypes...the prototype of prototypes, this means to say: the u n i v e r s a l F a t h e r.

One of the meanings of the first commandment — "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus xx, 3) — is that one should not substitute an intellectual abstraction of God for the spiritual reality of God. One therefore sins against the first commandment when one substitutes for the fiery, luminous and vibrant Being of life the abstractions of a "principle" or "idea" — be it the "First Cause", or the "Absolute" — which are, truth to tell, only mentally "graven images" or mental idols created by the human intellect.

Therefore let us not sin against the first commandment and let us not substitute mentally graven images or abstract ideas for the reality of Justice. But, on the other hand, let us also not embrace the cause of intellectual iconoclasts who want to see only idols in every concept and abstract idea. For all concepts and abstract ideas can become icons or "sacred images" when one considers them not as the end, but rather as the beginning of the way of knowledge of spiritual reality. In the domain of the intellectual life, hypotheses do not play the role of idols, but rather that of sacred images. Because no one accepts a hypothesis as absolute truth, just as no one worships a sacred image as absolute reality. Yet hypotheses are fruitful in that they lead us to the truth, in guiding us to it within the totality of our experience — just as icons or sacred images are also fruitful in leading us to experience the spiritual reality that they represent. An icon is the beginning of the way to spiritual reality; it does not replace it — as in idolatry — but gives an impulse and direction towards it. Similarly, a concept or abstract idea does not replace spiritual reality, but rather gives an impulse and direction towards it. Therefore, let us avoid the Scylla of idolatry and the Charibdis of the intellectual iconoclastic attitude, and let us take abstract ideas as hypotheses leading to the truth, and images or symbols as our guides to reality. Let us therefore not commit the error of wanting to "explain" a symbol by reducing it to a few general abstract ideas. Let us also avoid the error of wanting to "concretize" an abstract idea by clothing it in the form of an allegory. Rather, let us seek practical spiritual experience of reality and the truth by means of concrete images as well as abstract ideas. For the Tarot is a system or organism of spiritual exercises; in the first place it is practical. If this were not so, it would be hardly worthwhile to occupy oneself with it.

Therefore, let us take the Arcanum "Justice" as an invitation towards an effort of consciousness with the intention of arriving at an experience of the reality it represents and an understanding of the truth that it expresses. First of all, it may be stated that it is in the domain of judgement that the reality and truth of justice manifests itself. Because to pronounce judgement with respect to anything whatsoever amounts to an action having as its aim the finding of justice. It is not only judges at tribunals who judge; everyone judges in the degree to which he thinks. All of us, in so far as we are thinking beings, are judges. Because every problem, every question that we try to resolve, gives way in reality to a session for our inner tribunal, where the "pros and cons" are

confronted and weighed before judgement is pronounced. We are all judges, good or bad; we are so, and we exercise the functions of a judge almost unceasingly from morning 'til night. The commandment — "Thou shalt not judge" (Matthew vii, 1) — would therefore amount to the renunciation of thought. For to think is to judge. "True" and "false", "beautiful" and "ugly", "good" and "bad" are judgements that we pronounce many times each day. Nevertheless, it is one thing to judge and another to condemn. One judges phenomena and actions, but one cannot judge beings as such, because to do so would exceed the competence of the judgement of thought. Therefore one should not judge beings, because they are inaccessible to the judgement of thought which is founded only on phenomenal experience. Thus, negative judgement concerning beings, or their condemnation, is in reality impossible. And it is in this sense that there is a ground for understanding the Christian commandment: "Thou shalt not judge" — i.e. do not judge beings, do not condemn. For he who condemns assumes a function of which he is not capable. He lies in presenting as truth and justice a judgement which is devoid of any foundation. It is therefore better to say to one's neighbor, "You are acting like a madman", since whoever says, "You are mad", deserves to be punished by the fire of hell (cf. Matthew v, 22).

Therefore, one has to know the extent of one's knowledge and ignorance when one makes a judgement. And one is always ignorant of the noumenal being (or the soul) of another. This is why no human judgement has bearing on the soul.

And intuition? Is it there for nothing? Certainly it exists and is there for something. Nevertheless, intuition being perception due to sympathy and love never accuses. It always plays the role of the defence, the advocate. As it perceives the soul of beings, it sees only the image of God in them. Seeing and knowing that the soul of the offender is always the first victim of all sin or crime that he could commit, intuition can play no other role than that of the advocate. The saying "to know all is to forgive all" refers to understanding "from within" — that is to say, "intuitive" — and not to external understanding, i.e. phenomenal and discursive understanding. A moving formula for the role of intuition in the exercise of justice is given to us in the prayer of the Master as he was being crucified: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii, 34). This formula indicates three facts:

1) what they are doing, from a phenomenal point of view, is criminal;
2) judgement is handed over to the Father;
3) this is accompanied by the plea "forgive them", based on the certainty due to intuitive perception that "they know not what they do".

It is thanks to recognition of the role of intuition in intelligence, as distinct from the role of research and the establishment of facts due to understanding, that the strict justice of the latter faculty has been supplemented by equity (equitas — equité - Billigkeit) in the exercise of justice in countries which have accepted the principles of Roman and Anglo-Saxon law. Common law is what is found through understanding after it has compared the facts with the letter of the law. Equity is what intelligence finds necessary to modify within common law after comparison with the results of efforts to arrive at an intuitive perception of the human being whose lot is at stake. It is for the sake of equity, or the judgement of intuition within intelligence, that the jury became instituted in the exercise of justice within Christian civilization. Before Christianity the institution of the jury did not exist. Neither the wife of Pilate nor "the great multitude of people and women who bewailed and lamented him" (Luke xxiii, 27) had a voice at Pilate's tribunal. The "jury" (the women of Jerusalem) could then only weep or converse in secret with the "judge" (the wife of Pilate). Then it was equity which cried in the streets of Jerusalem and it was the intuition within intelligence which whispered warnings in Pilate's ear through the mouth of his wife. And it was the absence of a jury as a judicial organ of equity which forced the judge, Pilate, to resort to a monstrous deed of justice — abdicating the function of judge, washing his hands of it and transferring it to the prosecutor!

Now, justice is done only in the case when all the pertinent facts for and against the accused are established, then weighed by understanding, and then submitted to the judgement of intelligence. The three functions of justice — instruction, debate, and decision — correspond to the three degrees of knowledge — hypothetical, argumentative, and intuitive — designated by Plato as "δόξα" (doxa) or "hypothetical opinion", "διάνοια" (dianoia) or "conclusion based on arguments" and "ἐπιστήμη"

(episteme) or "intuitive perception". In fact, the facts established and presented by the instruction serve as the basis both for the prosecution and the defence for their respective hypotheses: "guilty" and "innocent". The debates which follow pursue the aim of arriving at a conclusion based on arguments advanced in favor of one or the other hypothesis. The decision taken by the jury is understood in principle as the result of an effort of consciousness to rise above the appearance of facts and the formalism of logical arguments with a view to an intuitive perception of the matter from a human point of view. It is therefore equity which has the last word.

One can say, therefore, that the process of the exercise of human justice consists in the total exertion of all three cognitive faculties of the human being: the faculty of forming hypotheses on the basis of data supplied by the senses (doxa), the faculty of logical discursion or intellectual weighing for and against these hypotheses (dianoia) and, lastly, the faculty of intuition (episteme).

Now, the structure of "fair human justice" is only — and can only be — an "image" or analogy of the structure of divine cosmic justice. The Jewish Cabbala brings this out more clearly than any other current of tradition that I know of.

There the system known as the "Sephiroth Tree" consists of three "pillars": the right, the left and the middle. The right pillar or that of Mercy comprises the Sephiroth Chokmah (Wisdom), Chesed or Gedulah (Grace/Mercy or Magnificence/Majesty) and Netzach (Victory or Triumph). The left pillar or that of Severity is composed of the Sephiroth Binah (Intelligence), Geburah or Pachad (Severity or Fear) and Hod (Glory or Honor). The Sephiroth of the middle pillar are Kether (Crown), Tiphareth (Beauty), Yesod (Foundation) and Malkuth (Realm or Kingdom).

The right pillar is often designated as the "pillar of Grace (Mercy)", whilst the left pillar bears the name of the "pillar of Severity". Now these two pillars (which the Zohar regards as those of metaphysical GOOD and EVIL) correspond, from the point of view of justice, to defence and prosecution, whilst the middle pillar corresponds to equity. The system of 10 Sephiroth is based on mobile equilibrium, with the tendency to re-establish it in an instance where a momentary dissymmetry is is produced. It is a system of balance. "In its most simple form a balance consists of a fixed axis (a column in the middle), which is generally vertical, a beam which forms a T or a Cross (†) with this axis and, lastly, two scales suspended at the ends of the beam. The balance gives rise to three fundamental relationships: 1/ the equilibrium between the two scales establishes a relationship of correlation; 2/ the common suspension of the scales at a point of balance and the propping up of the whole system by a support evokes a relationship of subordination; and 3/ the different roles of the two scales in the weighing introduces between the opposite ends a differentiation by virtue of which an orientation or current is produced."

(Francis WARRAIN, "La Théodicée de la Kabbale", Paris, 1949, p. 50)

In the system of Sephiroth it is a matter of a system of Balance established simultaneously in four worlds, or on four planes: the world of Emanation (òlam ha-atziluth), the world of Creation (òlam ha-beriah), the world of Formation (òlam ha-yetzirah), and the world of Action (òlam ha-àssiah), both in a vertical sense, i.e. the Balance establishes and re-establishes equilibrium between that which is above and that which is below, as well as in a horizontal sense, i.e. the Balance maintains equilibrium between the right side and the left side, the pillars of Grace and Severity. Therefore, weighing is effected on the one hand by means of scales on the right and left and on the other hand by scales above and below. The working of the right-left Balance is the Law of Justice which maintains equilibrium between the individual freedom of beings and universal order. In the last analysis it is KARMA which is the law governing the adjustment of mutual debts between beings. But the working of the heaven-earth Balance surpasses the justice of Karma; it is that of the justice of Grace.

"Gratia gratis data..." The sun shines on the good and the wicked alike. Is this morally right? Is it the justice of Grace here which is higher than the protective, distributive and punitive justice of the Law? This is so. There is the sublime "other justice" of grace, which is the meaning of the New Testament. For the Old Testament is to the New Testament as Karma is to Grace. Grace also makes use of the Balance, i.e. Justice. It is the Balance whose one scale is on the

earth and whose other scale is in heaven. The Lord's prayer reveals to us the principle of the Justice of Grace and the operation of weighing by means of the heaven-earth Balance. There it is said: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." And then the Master adds: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew vi, 12, 14-15).

The Master is explicit with respect to the Balance operating between earth and heaven— "... if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" — this is the law, this is the infallible and implacable operation of the heaven-earth Balance. That this Balance governs not only forgiveness but also the entire domain of gifts from above, understood as the Holy Spirit, is evident in the words of the Master concerning the Lord's prayer in the Gospel of Luke: "If you then who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" (Luke xi, 13)

Now, the sun shines on the good and the wicked alike. But it is certainly necessary to open the windows of a dark room in order for light to be able to enter there. The light of the sun is in no way created or merited by us. It is a gift, pure and simple — gratia gratis data. Nevertheless, it is necessary to open our windows in order for it to enter our abode, just as it is necessary to open our eyes in order to see it. The practical meaning of the heaven-earth Balance is that of cooperation with grace. Human effort is therefore not for nothing in the domain of the working of grace. Neither election alone from above (Calvinism) nor faith alone below (Lutheranism) suffice for the requirements of the heaven-earth Balance. Chosen or not chosen, having faith or not, it is necessary for us, for example, "to forgive those who trespass against us" here below in order for our trespasses to be forgiven above. There is a correlation — not in measure, but rather in nature — between the scale below, "Effort", and the scale above, "Gift", of the heaven-earth Balance. The correlation between Effort below and Gift from above is not, I repeat, one of measure or quantity, but rather one of substance or quality. It can be that the forgiveness on my part of one single offense by another can produce the forgiveness of a thousand or so offences of the same nature by me. The heaven-earth Balance does not weigh quantity; its working belongs entirely to the domain of quality. This is why there is no quantitative justice in the relationship between efforts below and gifts from above. The latter always surpass the measure of quantitative justice. This is important to understand above all with regard to the glaring injustice of eternal hell, that one life — or more, it does not matter — which is limited in time can bring about. Eternal hell is unjust, however, only from a purely quantitative point of view. One compares the limited number of years of life — or lives — on earth with the unlimited number of years of eternity and thus one arrives at the conclusion that the measure of chastisement is out of all proportion with the measure of the transgression and that, consequently, there is no justice. But let us consider the problem of eternal hell not from the point of view of quantity (which is absurd, as time does not exist in eternity), but rather from that of quality.

How is it with this problem, then?

The following is the answer we arrive at when we abandon a quantitative correlation between time and eternity: whoever enters the region of eternity without an ounce of love, enters it without an ounce of love, i.e. he enters eternal hell. For to live without love — this is hell. And to live without love in the region of eternity — this is to live in eternal hell.

> "Hell is the state of the soul powerless to come out of itself, absolute self-centeredness, dark and evil isolation, i.e. final inability to love." (Nicholas BERDYAEV, "The Destiny of Man", London, 1937, p. 351)

This subjective state of soul is neither long nor short — it is as intense as eternity is. Similarly, the blessedness that a saint experiences in the vision of God is as intense as eternity— although it could not so last, since someone present at the ecstasy of a saint would time it as

a few minutes. The "region" of eternity is that of intensity, which surpasses the measures of quantity that we employ in time and space. "Eternity" is not a duration of infinite length; it is the "intensity of quality" which, if compared with time and thus translated into the language of quantity, is comparable with an infinite duration. Concerning this, Nicholas A. BERDYAEV says:

> "In our life on earth it is given to us to experience torments that appear to us to go on for ever, that are not for a moment, for an hour or a day, but seem to last an infinity... Objectively this infinity may last a moment, an hour, or a day, but it receives the name of everlasting hell... When Origen said that Christ will remain on the cross so long as a single creature remains in hell, he expressed an eternal truth." (Nicholas Berdyaev, "The Destiny of Man", London, 1937, p. 342 and p. 347)

What can one add to this, if not: - A m e n. ? - Eternal hell is the state of a soul imprisoned within itself, where the soul has no hope of coming out. "Eternal" means to say "without hope". All suicides committed through desperation bear witness to the reality of eternal hell as a state of soul. Before committing suicide, the person who commits it experiences a state of complete despair, i.e. eternal hell. This is why he prefers nothingness to the state of despair. Nothingness is therefore his last hope.

Eternal bliss — "Heaven" — is, in contrast, the state of soul which is filled with boundless hope. This is not a blissfulness which lasts for an infinite number of years, it is the intensity of hope which gives the quality "eternal". Similarly, it is the intensity of despair which imparts to the state of soul designated "hell" the quality "eternal".

The anguish of Gethsemane which gave rise to perspiration of blood was eternal. This night, the night of Gethsemane, was not measured in hours. It was — it is — immeasurable, therefore eternal. It is due to its eternity that HE sweated blood, and not because of the temporary, and therefore passing, trial. He knew eternal hell through experience, and as he came out of it, we have the "Good News" that not only Death is vanquished by the Resurrection, but also that Hell is — through Gethsemane. The majesty of the victory over hell announced by the words "I am H E" ("C'est M O I") caused many to prostrate themselves on the ground, from amongst the band of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees who had come to arrest him (John xviii, 5-6). The soul of ORIGEN was also prostrated in the face of the Victory over over eternal hell and moved by the revelation contained in the words: "It is I", spoken by Him who had just come out from eternal hell. This is why Origen himself knew with certain knowledge that there would be no "damned" at the end of the world and that the Devil, also, would be saved. And whoever meditates on the sweat of blood in Gethsemane and on the words "It is I" (or "I am HE") ("C'est MOI"), announcing the eternal victory over eternal hell, also will know with certain knowledge that eternal hell exists as a reality, but that it will be empty at the end of time. The sweat of blood in Gethsemane is the source of "Origenism"; here is the source of its inspiration. But the Good News of the eternal victory over eternal hell has not been understood by the "Greeks" (those seeking wisdom), nor by the "Jews" (those wanting miracles). It can be understood only by Christians. For "Greeks" deny the reality of eternal hell as being incompatible with the idea of God who is at one and the same time good and all-powerful. "Jews" abide by eternal damnation, i.e. they insist on a populated eternal hell, because otherwise God (as the Judge) would be lacking the absolute power of punishment. They deny the infinity of divine Love. And it is Christians alone who accept and understand the "folly and weakness" of the Cross (cf. 1 Corinthians i, 22-25), i.e. the Work of infinite Love achieved by no other means than by Love itself. For them, not only do the means not sanctify the aim, but also the means must be identical with the aim. They know that love will never be taught and understood through severity and fear. They apprehend hearts directly through goodness, beauty and truth, whilst the fear of hell and eternal damnation has

not given birth to love in any human heart hitherto — and will never do so. And it is not the severity of strict justice which teaches us the love of the Father of the Prodigal Son, but rather the joyous feast with which the son was welcomed home by him.

Nevertheless, the "Greeks" would say that the Father knew in advance that the son would come back, since the son had, in fact, no other choice, and everything is only a drama in appearance. The Father's way of acting was only a "clever ruse" (Hegel's "List der Vernunft"). And the "Jews" would say that it was the power of the Father which acted within the soul of the prodigal son and commanded him to return to his father's home, which irresistible power he could only obey.

Thus, the joy and the feast of welcome from the Father remain incomprehensible both to the worshippers of God's wisdom ("Greeks") and the worshippers of God's power ("Jews"). The meaning of both is understandable only to the worshippers of the love of God ("Christians"). They understand that the story of the Prodigal Son is a real drama of real love and real freedom, and that the joy and celebration of the Father are genuine ((....?)), just as the suffering of the father and also that of the son, which preceded their reunion, was genuine ((....?)). Moreover, they understand that the story of the Prodigal Son is the history of the whole human race, and that the history of the human race is a real drama of real divine love and real human freedom.

"Greeks", "Jews", and "Christians" -- worshippers of the wisdom, power and love of God! There are always plenty of "Greeks" and "Jews" in the lap of the Church, and within Christianity in general. It is they who are responsible for all heresies of faith and all moral heresies, and it is they who cause the scissions and schisms in the universal community of Christians. Thus the central fact of divine love, the Incarnation of the Word and the person of the God-Man, was from the beginning the special object of efforts by "Jews" and "Greeks" with a view to transforming it into a deed of power or a fact of wisdom. "Jesus Christ is only the Messiah, the chosen and anointed man sent by God" taught the "Jews" (Ebionites and Cerinthians), who denied the divine Incarnation as being incompatible with the omnipotence of God. "The Word incarnated, but is not God: the Word is his creation," taught the "Jews" of the fourth century, disciples of Arius, inspired by the idea that the power of God is sufficient to create a being of such perfection that he could accomplish the work of salvation without himself incarnating.

"There are two persons in Jesus Christ, one divine and the other human", said the "Greeks" known under the name of "Nestorians", who saw an impassable abyss between absolute divine wisdom and relative human wisdom, and who were unable to admit that the former united itself with the latter without diminution and obscuration. On the contrary: "There is only a single nature in Jesus Christ," taught the "Jews" known under the name of "Eutychians" who — being blind in that which concerns the union of the two natures, divine and human, through l o v e, without either losing itself in the other or the two losing themselves in giving birth to a third nature — believed that the union of two natures could only be substantial, and that divine omnipotence could certainly accomplish this alchemical miracle of the fusion of two natures substantially. Later "Jews" known as "Monophysites" and "Jacobites" took over the doctrine of Eutychianism and founded their own churches.

At the same time "Greeks", convinced that there is only wisdom or ignorance — the former being pure spirit and the latter being matter — denied the reality of the two natures in the God-Man, and therefore the Incarnation itself, since the incarnation of wisdom would amount to its reduction to a state of ignorance. This is why the "Doceta" (the name that is attributed to them) taught that the human nature of the Word was only apparent, and that the body of Jesus Christ was only a phantom.

The "Greek" Apollinaris (fourth century) believed it necessary to change the proportion between the two natures and to reduce the presence of human nature in Jesus Christ by a

third. He taught that the complete human nature consists of three principles: body, soul (psyche) and spirit (pneuma), whilst the human nature in Jesus Christ consisted only of two principles — body and soul — his human spirit having been replaced by the divine Word. Here one can see again the same "Greek" scruple of wanting to preserve divine wisdom intact and unobscured by the human element.

Thus, the "Greeks", devoted to the cause of the supremacy of wisdom, and the "Jews", devoted to that of the supremacy of the power of God, have endeavored through the course of centuries to dethrone the principle of love in favor either of the principle of wisdom or that of power.

The struggle for the principle of love commenced in antiquity, and continued during the Middle Ages and after; it still continues today around the Church, at the heart of the Church, and within the soul of every Christian individual. For what was the struggle between the extreme "realists" and the extreme "nominalists" at the heart of the medieval and modern Scholastic School, if not the struggle between the "Greeks" ("realists") and the "Jews" ("nominalists")?... and the struggle between the "rationalists" ("ratio nobilior potestas") and the "voluntarists" ("voluntas nobilior potestas") at the heart of the same School? For the "realists" and "rationalists", ideas were objective realities and God's faculty of reason was higher than his will, whilst for the "nominalists" and "voluntarists" ideas were only names under which one classes phenomena — useful <u>abstractions</u> with a view to the classification of phenomena — and it was will which was higher than the faculty of reason within God. For the latter God is, in the first place, all-powerful Will, whilst for the former He is, above all, Reason — infinite wisdom.

And the <u>love</u> of God!? It is this third, essentially Christian, principle which has held the <u>balance</u> through the course of the centuries, and holds it still in preventing the complete scission and disintegration of Christianity. In so far as there is peace at the heart of Christianity, it is due only to the principle of the supremacy of l o v e.

For the complete victory of "realism", with its faith in that which is <u>general</u> at the expense of that which is individual, would have drowned Christianity in severity and cruelty. This is manifested with sufficient certainty in the historical fact of the inquisition — this latter being the practical conclusion of the fundamental dogma of realism: "<u>the general is superior to the individual</u>", which was consequently acted upon.

And the complete victory of "nominalism" would have drowned Christianity in the element of the relativity of the individual and personal opinions, beliefs and revelations of a kind such that it would have disintegrated to dust. The hundreds of Protestant sects and modes of belief at the core of these sects proves this with absolute certainty.

No, in so far as there is unity in space (the Church) and in time (tradition) for Christianity, this is due neither to "realist" severity nor to "nominalist" indulgence, but rather to the peace of equilibrium between the "Greek" and "Jewish" tendencies that the "Christian" tendency of love has succeeded in establishing and maintaining. If this were not so, the whole Christian world would now be divided into two spheres: a sphere where one would suffocate under "puritanical severity", "Huguenot boredom" and a kind of Calvinism (Calvin himself was a "realist"); and a sphere where each family or even each person would have a small religion and a little private church (Luther himself was a "nominalist") of a kind where <u>Christianity</u> as such would be only an abstraction, only a <u>name</u> or <u>word</u> ("mere vox" or "flatus vocis").

Hence, these are the things at work when one evokes the problem of <u>Balance</u>.

One generally encounters the same things that are in Christianity also at the heart of the Hermetic tradition or "occult movement". Here also there are "Greeks", "Jews" and

"Christians". The "Jews" seek for miracles, i.e. deeds of magical realization, and the "Greeks" aspire to an absolute theory which would be to exoteric philosophies as algebra is to arithmetic. Thus, Martinez de PASQUALLY and the circle of his disciples practiced ceremonial magic with the intention of bringing about the evocation of the Risen One himself. HOENÉ-WRONSKI, in contrast, elaborated an absolute system of the "philosophy of philosophies", the purpose of which was to understand within its framework, and to put in its proper place within it, every philosophy of the past, present and future.

FABRE D'OLIVET (author of "The Philosophical History of the Human Race") and SAINT-YVES D'ALVEYDRE (author of "Archeometry or the System of Principles and Criteria for all Philosophical, Religious and Scientific Doctrines of the Past, Present and Future") represent the "Greek" tendency par excellence within the framework of the Hermetic or occult movement. ELIPHAS LÉVI and authors on magic and the practical Cabbala who have continued his work from the nineteenth and twentieth century to the present day represent, in contrast, the "Jewish" tendency.

Louis Claude de SAINT-MARTIN, after having collaborated with the intimate circle of disciples of Martinez de Pasqually, dissociated himself from this circle and the work of its master. He did so as a friend, not as an adversary, and in no way doubted the reality of the magic practiced in this circle. He did so because he had found the "inner way", the experiences and realization of which surpass in value the experiences and realizations of "Magic, Theurgy, Necromancy and artificial Magnetism" –

> "This sort of clarity (issuing from the practice of the rites of high Theurgy) must belong to those who are called directly to make use of it, by the order of God and for the manifestation of his glory. And when they are called there in this way there is no uneasiness about their instruction, for then they receive, without any darkening, a thousand times more notions, and notions a thousand times more sure than those that a simple amateur such as myself could give them on all these fundamentals.
>
> Wanting to speak to others, and above all to the Public (via books), is to want – to no purpose – to stimulate and to work up a vain curiosity, rather for the vanity of the writer than for the benefit of the reader. Now, if I have made errors of this sort in my earlier writings, I would continue to do so if I were to persist in marching on the spot. Thus, my recent writings speak much more about this "central initiation" which, through our u n i o n with God, can teach us all that we must know, and there is very little about the descriptive anatomy of those delicate points concerning which you would like me to disclose my view" –

says Saint-MARTIN in a letter dated 1797 (cf. Robert AMBELAIN, "Le Martinisme", Paris, 1946, p. 113). He found the "true theurgy" in the domain of the inner spiritual life and consequently abandoned outer or ceremonial theurgy. On the other hand, Saint-Martin did not take up the "Greek" way: the grandiose intellectual adventure of creating an absolute philosophical system. He remained <u>practical</u>; he only changed the form of the practice, namely the practice of ceremonial magic for that of sacred or divine magic, which is founded on mystical experience and gnostic revelation. Thus Saint-Martin represents the <u>third</u> tendency in the occidental Hermetic movement – the <u>Christian</u> tendency.

Just as with all Christianity in general, Hermeticism has not entirely disintegrated – thanks to the "Christians" at its core, who maintain equilibrium between the "Jews" and the "Greeks". If this were not so, we would now have two divergent literatures and movements, which would have in common only a few vestiges of a once common terminology. One current, the "Greek" current, would perhaps at some time arrive at the "Archeometry of

past, present and future Archeometries"; and the other current, the "Jewish" current, would perhaps attain to the "zodiacal operation of the evocation of the twelve Thrones".

However, the source of the life and viability of the entire Hermetic current through the course of the ages is to be found neither in intellectual theory nor in magical practice. It is quite precisely stated by Hermes Trismegistus, the pre-Christian sage, in the dialogue "ASCLEPIUS":-

> "For speaking as a prophet speaks, I tell you that in after times none will pursue philosophy in singleness of heart. Philosophy is nothing else than striving through constant contemplation and saintly piety to attain to knowledge of God; but there will be many who will make philosophy hard to understand, and corrupt it with manifold speculations ... philosophy will be mixed with diverse and unintelligible sciences, such as arithmetic, music and geometry. Whereas the student of philosophy undefiled, which is dependent on devotion to God, and on that alone, ought to direct his attention to the other sciences only so far as he may... be led to revere, adore, and praise God's skill and wisdom... For to worship God in thought and spirit with singleness of heart, to revere God in all his works, and to give thanks to God, whose will, and his alone, is wholly filled with G o o d n e s s — this is philosophy unsullied by intrusive cravings for unprofitable knowledge." (Asclepius i; trsl. Walter Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, pp. 309 and 311)

Let us now place this statement of pre-Christian Hermeticism into the Christian epoch, with all the transformations that this transference entails, and we have the eternal foundation of Hermeticism — the source of its life and viability.

The text quoted, considered from the point of view of its value in advancing knowledge, appears quite banal; it appears as banality itself. Any pious Cistercian of the XIIth century — proud of his pious ignorance — would have been able to be the author of this text. But let us consider it from the point of view of the will, taking it as a program of action — action through millennia, from the past and into the future. What does it then say to us?

At first it tells us that there are three basic diverse impulses underlying this kind of human endeavor (the endeavor of aspiration to knowledge) which aim at building the edifice of the body of philosophy and the sciences. These are: curiosity, where one wants to know for the sake of knowledge, according to the principle of "art for art's sake"; usefulness, where one is led to the work of research, experimentation and invention through the needs of human life, so as to make labor more fruitful, to preserve health and to prolong life; and, lastly, the glory of God, where there is neither curiosity nor practical utility but, as the great paleontologist of our time, Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN, said: "... the tremendous power of the divine attraction... the specific effect of which is... to make man's endeavor holy" (Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "Le milieu divin. An essay on the interior life", London, 1964, p. 65).

Thus, there is knowledge for the sake of knowledge, knowledge for the sake of better serving one's neighbor, and knowledge in order to better love God. Knowledge for the sake of knowledge comes down in the last analysis to the promise of the Serpent in paradise: "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis iii, 5). Therefore, it is for his own glory that man takes up this way. This is why ancient Hermeticism, Jewish Cabbalistic Hermeticism and Christian Hermeticism unanimously condemn curiosity or knowledge for the sake of knowledge as vain, foolhardy and baneful. Thus, it is said in an extract from the Sacred Book of Hermes Trismegistus entitled V i r g i n (or Pupil [of the Eye]) of the W o r l d

(Kore Kosmu):---

"Hermes, you are doing a rash thing in making man; for he is like to be a creature that sees with inquisitive eyes, and hears things he has no right to hear, and indulges greedily his sense of taste, and makes voluptuous use of his sense of smell, and misuses to all extremes his sense of touch. Tell me, you that are the author of his being, is it your settled purpose to leave him free from care, this being that is going to look with audacious gaze upon the beauteous mysteries of Nature? ... They will dig up roots of plants, and investigate the properties of stones. They will dissect the lower animals — yes, and one another also — seeking to find out how they have come to be alive, and what manner of thing is hidden within... They will dig mines, and search into the uttermost darkness of the depths of the earth. And all this might be borne, but they will do yet more: they will press on to the world above, seeking to discover by observation the laws of movement of the heavens. Are they then to meet with no impediment? Shall they never be overpowered by the cruel stings of fear, and shall they luxuriate in a life exempt from cares? ... that they may fail to get the things they hoped for, and be subdued by the pangs of grief. Let their presumptuous eagerness be disappointed of its expectations." (Kore Kosmu, trsl. Walter Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, p.483)

Such is the <u>accusation</u> of the demon MOMUS — "a mighty Spirit... who had a body of enormous bulk, and a mind of surpassing power" (ibid. p.481) — the spirit inquisitor of the human race quoted in Kore Kosmu.

But here follows Hermes Trismegistus' defence of man's cognitive faculty in the discourse dedicated to his son TAT, entitled "The Key":

"For man is a being of divine nature, he is comparable, not to the other living creatures on the earth, but to the gods in heaven. Nay, if we are to speak the truth without fear, he who is indeed a man is even above the gods of heaven, or at any rate he equals them in power. None of the gods of heaven will ever quit heaven, and pass its boundary, and come down to earth; but man ascends even to heaven, and measures it; and what is more than all beside, he mounts to heaven without quitting the earth; to so vast a distance can he put forth his power! We must not shrink then from saying that a man on earth is a mortal god, and that a god in heaven is an immortal man." (Corpus Hermeticum, book x, "A discourse of Hermes Trismegistus. The Key"; trsl. Walter Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, p.205)

Here we have accusation (prosecution) and defence. The judgement which ensues is that knowledge for the sake of knowledge, which Momus, the prosecutor, has in mind, is to be condemned, since Momus is right in so far as his accusation is applied to the impulse which aspires to knowledge for the sake of knowledge. On the other hand, the defence advanced by Hermes Trismegistus, in so far as it is applied to the use of the cognitive faculty either for the glory of God or for the service of one's neighbor, is well-founded and just. There is, therefore, a legitimate — even glorious — knowledge, and an illegitimate, vain, indiscreet, and foolhardy knowledge.

Now, Hermeticism — in its life and soul — is the millennial-old current in human history of <u>knowledge for the sake of the glory of God</u>, whilst the corpus of today's official sciences is due either to utility or to the desire for knowledge for the sake of knowledge (curiosity).

We Hermeticists are theologians of that Holy Scripture revealing God which is named "the <u>World</u>"; similarly, theologians of the Holy Scriptures revealing God are Hermeticists in so far as they dedicate their effort to the glory of God. And just as the

world is not only a material body but is also soul and spirit, so is the Holy Scripture not simply the "dead letter" but is also soul and spirit. This is why our threefold knowledge (mystical-gnostic-magical) of the threefold world has dedicated itself through the course of the centuries to the glory of the Holy Trinity, just as the threefold knowledge of divine revelation through the Holy Scripture (i.e. through the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocalypse) does. Are we not called, we theologians of the World, and you, theologians of the Holy Scripture, to watch at the same altar and to fulfill the same task of not letting the lamp illumined to the glory of God be extinguished in the world? Is it not our common duty to provide for it, to provide the holy oil of human endeavor so that its flame is never extinguished, so that it always bears witness to God by the very fact of its existence, and so that it continues to burn from century to century? Has not the time finally arrived when we Hermeticists shall take account of the incontestable fact that it is thanks to the Church that we have air to breathe and that we have a place of shelter and refuge in this world of materialism, imperialism, nationalism, technologism, biologism and psychologism? It is in so far that the Church lives that we live. The church bells once reduced to silence, all human voices desiring to serve the glory of God will also be reduced to silence. We live and we die with the Church. Because in order to live, we need air to breathe; we need the atmosphere of piety, sacrifice, and appreciation of the invisible as a higher reality. This air, this atmosphere in the world, exists in the world only by grace of the Church. Without it Hermeticism — indeed, every idealistic philosophy and all metaphysical idealism — would be drowned in utilitarianism, materialism, industrialism, technologism, biologism and psychologism. Dear Unknown Friend, imagine to yourself a world without the Church. Imagine a world of factories, clubs, sports, political meetings, utilitarian universities, utilitarian arts or recreations — in which you would hear not a single word of praise for the Holy Trinity or of benediction in its name. Imagine to yourself a world in which you would never hear a human voice say: "Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum", or "Benedicat vos omnipotens Deus, Pater, Filius et Spiritus Sanctus". A world without worship and without benediction... how deprived of ozone the psychic and spiritual atmosphere would then be, and how empty and cold it would be! Do you think that Hermeticism could exist and live for a single day!?

Therefore make use of the Balance of Justice and judge impartially. When you have done so, you will no doubt say: Never will I throw stones — in thought, or through word or deed — against the Church, since it is she who makes possible, and stimulates and protects, human endeavor for the glory of God. And as Hermeticism is such an endeavor, it could not exist without the Church. We Hermeticists have only one choice: either to live as parasites (for it is thanks to the Church that we are able to live), if we are strangers to, or are hostile to, the Church; or to live as her faithful friends and servants, if we understand what we owe to her and so begin to love her.

Now is the time for the Hermetic movement to make true Christian peace with the Church and to cease to be her semi-illegitimate child, leading a half-tolerated life more or less in the shadow of the Church — and to become eventually an adopted child, if not a recognized legitimate child.

But "it takes two to love". And there is many a pretension to be abandoned in order to accomplish this. What is sure, however, is that if the two parties in question have at heart only the glory of God, all obstacles to this peace will evaporate in smoke.

May the pretension of certain Hermeticists evaporate in smoke — namely to have the

authority to found small churches under their own leadership and to set up altar against altar and hierarchy against hierarchy.

On the other hand, may the pretensions of certain theologians evaporate in smoke — namely to be a supreme tribunal, without recourse to further appeal, concerning all planes of existence beyond the five senses. The lesson learned through Copernicus and Galileo by theologians who arrogated to themselves the authority of a supreme tribunal for the perceptible world can also be repeated on higher levels of the world — in case of a relapse into the arrogant spirit of Galileo's judges concerning other planes of existence. The revealed, and therefore absolute, truths of Salvation — yes, these are entrusted to the Magisterium of the Church, and therefore to the work of interpretation, explanation and presentation of competent theologians. But the immense domain where Salvation operates — the physical, vital, psychic and spiritual worlds: their structure, forces, beings, their reciprocal relationships, their transformations and the history of these transformations — aren't all these aspects of the Macrocosm and Microcosm, and many others, the field of work to be accomplished for the glory of God and for the benefit of one's neighbor, for all those who want to do so and who do not want to bury in the earth the talents given to them by the Master (cf. Matthew xxv, 14-30) and thus to be unprofitable servants?

Let us therefore appeal to the Balance of Justice — which is at the same time the Balance of Peace — let us take recourse to it, let us dedicate ourselves to it, let us serve it! Then we shall operate with the universal and eternal Magic of Justice, for universal and general good. Since he who invokes the Balance of Justice — who takes it as a method of practical training in thinking, feeling and the will — such a one, I may say, falls under the title of the fourth beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be satisfied!" (Matthew v, 6). "Satisfied" — this means to say: justice will be done.

Let us therefore be just towards the theologians, and they will be just towards us. Let us recognize our just debts towards the Church, and she will recognize our just rights. And there will then be p e a c e, i.e. the operation of the Balance of Justice.

We who are occupied with the way of the spiritual exercise of the Balance of Justice (for all the Arcana of the Tarot are, in the first place, spiritual exercises) have to do so thoroughly and completely — which would not be the case if we were to fail to put to work the Balance of Justice in our thought and in our hearts with respect to another domain where there is no peace, and where justice is yet to be established.

This is the sphere of relationships existing between Hermeticism and o f f i c i a l S c i e n c e.

Just as it is time that Hermeticism made peace with the Church and finds its rightful place within its heart, so is it time that it made true peace with Academia, and finds its rightful place there. Because, until now, Hermeticism in the eyes of Academia is only an illegitimate child: the fruit of an obscure liaison between a religion unfaithful to its own vocation and a science that is likewise untrue to its own vocation. In other words, Hermeticism is a badly-coined alloy of false religiosity with a false scientific spirit. In the eyes of Academia, Hermeticists are only a clique, which makes its recruits amongst mistaken believers and misguided scientists.

Now let us again make use of the Balance of Justice.

Is the above-mentioned criticism valid? — Yes, it is.

It is well-founded, because Academia as well as the Church is based on the three sacred vows — Obedience, Poverty and Chastity — whilst we Hermeticists behave as pontiffs, without the sacraments and the discipline that this entails, and as academics, without due experience and discipline. We do not want to obey either religious or scientific discipline. At the same time, it is Obedience or discipline which underlies the moral greatness

of the Church and the intellectual greatness of Academia.

The "asceticism" of Academia entails, as well as Obedience to the authority of facts, strict rules for proofs and for collaboration, and Chastity in the guise of complete sobriety, and also Poverty in the form of ignorance, postulated as the basis of all research work. A true scientist is an objective man — sober and open to all experience or new thought.

The fact that true scientists are as rare as saints in the Church does not at all alter the fact that it is they who represent Science. Because it is not the sick and deformed who represent a family, but rather its healthy members.

Now, true science is the discipline of objectivity, sobriety and diligence or, in other words, the discipline of the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty.

For one cannot be diligent if one is not poor; richness always entails idleness. One cannot be sober without having a dislike of all that intoxicates; and this is chastity. Lastly, one cannot be objective without obedience to experience and the strict rules of research.

It is by virtue of the practice of these three sacred vows that science makes true progress. Thanks to this practice it advances in the direction of <u>depth</u>, i.e. into the same domain as Hermeticism. Science has made three great discoveries in the domain of depth: it has penetrated in the the depths of the sphere of biology to discover the <u>law of evolution</u>; it has penetrated into the depths of matter and has found <u>pure energy</u>; it has dared to penetrate into the realm of psychic depth, to discover the world of <u>occult consciousness</u>. The three great discoveries of science — evolution, nuclear energy and the Unconsciousness — have certainly made science a collaborator, if not a rival, of Hermeticism, by the fact of having entered the domain which is proper to Hermeticism, the domain of depth.

Therefore Hermeticism now shares its hereditary domain with science... as a sister or as a rival? This is the question upon which everything depends.

All depends on our decision, we Hermeticists of today, to take either the part of <u>service</u> towards science in its endeavor to explore the realm of depth or that of <u>rivalry</u> with it. The decision to serve implies and entails renunciation of the role of representing an esoteric and sacred science different from exoteric and profane science. It is a matter of renouncing the desire to set up "chair against chair", just as with respect to the Church it is a matter of renouncing the desire to erect "altar against altar". Hermeticism, in pretending to be science — i.e. a body of doctrines of general validity, and generally demonstrable — can only cut a poor shape. For, being essentially <u>esoteric</u>, i.e. intimate and personal, it cannot with any appreciable success play the role of a science of general validity demonstrable to everyone. The esoteric character of Hermeticism and the general validity of science are mutually exclusive. One cannot — and must not — present what is intimate and personal, that is to say <u>esoteric</u>, as having a general validity, that is to say <u>scientific</u>.

Yes, I know with 100 per cent certainty that there are great truths in Hermeticism, but these truths are not <u>scientific</u>, i.e. of general validity. They are valuable only for <u>personalities</u>, each individually, who have the same hunger and the same thirst as I, the same ideal as I, and perhaps the same memories from past recall as I have. They are valuable only for members "of my family" — the people whom I call "my unknown friends" to whom these letters are addressed.

Hermeticism is not a science which differs from other sciences or which even opposes itself to them. No more is it a religion. It is a uniting — in the inner forum of personal and intimate consciousness — of revealed truth with truth acquired through human endeavor. Being a synthesis — intimate and personal for each person — of religion and science, it cannot rival either the one or the other. A hyphen does not have the function of replacing the two

terms that it unites. The true Hermeticist is therefore one who applies to himself a double discipline — that of the Church and that of Academia. He prays and he thinks. And he does so with the fervor and sincerity of a son of the Church, concerning his praying, and with the discipline and diligence of a laborer of Academia, concerning his thinking. "Ora et labora" - "pray and work" - is certainly his formula, where "and" is the legitimate place of Hermeticism. It is an open door, in the inner forum of his consciousness, between the oratory and the laboratory. It is the door between the two — and not another laboratory or another oratory.

O r a et l a b o r a. O r a t o r y and l a b o r a t o r y united in the inner forum of the personality. What is this, in the last analysis, if not the practice of the Balance of Justice?

Hermeticism, understood as the balance "Ora et labora", implies a great deal of readjustment with respect to habits of thought which have taken root amongst Hermeticists since the second half of the nineteenth century. The following is an example that I have chosen because of its great spiritual significance.

Christian Hermeticists are unanimous concerning the pre-eminence of the mission and the person of Jesus CHRIST in the spiritual history of mankind. For them, Jesus Christ is to other spiritual masters of mankind (Krishna, Buddha, Moses, Orpheus, etc.) as the sun is to the other visible planets in the heavens. In this they distinguish themselves from modern Theosophists of the school of Blavatsky and from oriental occultists and esotericists, e.g. Yoga, Vedanta, Sufi, Mazdaznan, Gurdjieff's school, etc. They are Christians, therefore, in the sense that they recognize the uniqueness of the divine Incarnation who is Jesus Christ.

At the same time, the tendency is certainly accentuated, if not prevalent, amongst contemporary Hermeticists to occupy themselves more with the "Cosmic Christ" or the "Logos" than with the human person of the "Son of Man", Jesus of Nazareth. More importance is attributed to the divine and abstract aspect of the God-Man than to his human and concrete aspect.

Therefore, let us once again take recourse to the Balance of Justice and weigh up the alternatives: "cosmic Principle" and "concrete Personality of the Master".

Firstly, let us look at results or fruits in the domain of experience of aspiration to knowledge of the Logos, and those of aspiration to contact with Jesus Christ, the Master.

It must be pointed out, in the first place, that it was not the revelation or knowledge of the cosmic Logos which gave rise to the new spiritual impulse that manifested itself in the apostles, martyrs and saints — which we call "Christianity" — but rather the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It was not through the name of the Logos that demons were exorcised, the sick were healed, and the dead were brought back to life, but rather through the name of Jesus (cf. Acts iv, 12; Ephesians i, 21).

> "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phillipians ii, 9-11)

It was contact with the person of Jesus-Christ which opened up the current of miracles and conversions. And it is the same even today.

With respect to the cosmic Logos, the idea was neither new nor activating at the beginning of Christianity. Hellenistic Hermeticists (cf. "The Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus),

Stoics and Philo of Alexandria had said almost everything there is to be said on it in philosophical, gnostic and mystical terms. Consequently St. John did not have in mind the advancement of a new doctrine of the Logos in his Gospel, but rather to bear witness to the fact that the Logos "became flesh and dwelt among us" (John i, 14).

Now, it was Jesus-Christ who gave to the idea of the Logos the warmth and life which created living Christianity, whilst the idea of the Logos held by the sages of antiquity, although it was true, was lacking this warmth and life. It had light, but magic was lacking here.

And it is the same even today.

Monsieur PHILIP OF LYONS (1849-1905), the Thaumaturgist, attributed all his miraculous healings and other prodigies to the Friend: "All I do is to ask him on your behalf, this is all" (Dr. Phillipe Encausse (Papus), "Le Maître Philippe de Lyon", Paris, 1958, p. 146). Now, the Friend was Jesus Christ.

Monsieur Philip was PAPUS' "spiritual master". Papus had yet another master, who was his "intellectual master". This was Marquis Saint-YVES d'ALVEYDRE, the author of "Mission des Juifs" ("Mission of the Jews") and "Archéomètre" ("Archeometry"). The latter gave himself up entirely to the endeavor to understand, and to make understood, the Logos or the Cosmic Christ. At the same time, Monsieur Philip of Lyons, "the father of the poor", served the work of Jesus-Christ in healing, comforting and illumining people from all social classes (e.g. both the Russian imperial family and the workers of Lyons), by making himself an instrument of Jesus-Christ.

The one brought about the invention of an intellectual instrument — archeometry — which he used to comprehend and express the cosmic logic of the work of the Logos in the history of mankind; the other made himself an instrument of the divine Magic of Jesus-Christ in order to serve his neighbor.

Papus found himself between a master of universal Logicism and a master of divine Magic. He found himself faced with a choice between the way of logicism exemplified by FABRE D'OLIVET, HOENÉ-WRONSKI and SAINT-YVES D'ALVEYDRE, and the way of divine Magic — of individual contact with Jesus Christ — represented by ELIPHAS LÉVI (in his maturity), MONSIEUR PHILIP, and all the Christian saints. Did he make a choice between these two ways? Yes and no. Yes, he made one in the sense of having understood the superiority of the Magic of love over ceremonial magic, and the superiority of contact with the Master to all theoretical knowledge of the cosmic Logos and to contact with any "magical chain". No, in the sense that he did not turn his back on Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and his work, but remained faithful to him until his death and even after his death — which, to its glory, will turn the eyes of all people of heart to the fact that the way of acting according to the principle "the feast is over, goodbye to the saint" can only distress. Nevertheless, the attitude taken by Papus, faced with the two ways and two masters, was not only noble in a human sense. It divulges something more.

It is the faithfulness of Papus to Hermeticism which it discloses. For Hermeticism is an Athanor ("alchemical furnace") erected in the individual human consciousness, where the Mercury of intellectuality undergoes transmutation into the Gold of spirituality. St. Augustine acted as a Hermeticist in transmuting Platonism into Christian thought. Similarly, St. Thomas AQUINAS acted as a Hermeticist in doing the same thing with Aristotelianism. Both of them accomplished the Sacrament of Baptism with respect to Greece's intellectual heritage.

Now, this is precisely what Papus did — or was in the process of doing — with regard to the Logicism of Saint-Yves d'Alveydre and his precursors after meeting his spiritual master, Monsieur Philip of Lyons. It was neither a compromise nor a hesitation to take sides, but rather

the Hermetic hope of achieving a synthesis of Intellectuality and Spirituality. Papus took upon himself this inner work, whose beginning is a rending conflict between two contraries. We cannot say with certainty if, or how far, his endeavor was crowned with success — a premature death having deprived us of the possibility of being witness to the mature fruits of Papus' spiritual life. With respect to his endeavors in the outer world of serving as a link between Monsieur Philip and Saint-Yves d'Alveydre, Papus was not successful. As proof of this lack of success is the fact that Saint-Yves did not want to see Monsieur Philip at Lyons, nor did he invite him to see him. Concerning other people, Papus' endeavors were crowned with success: notably, it was Papus who procured for Monsieur Philip a circle of intelligent people — mainly occultists and doctors — which was important for both parties.

Papus' work has remained unfulfilled, at least on the visible plane. This work is the synthesis of Intellectuality and Spirituality, of the cosmic Logos and the Logos made flesh — or, briefly, Christian Hermeticism as such.

For Christian Hermeticism is a task — it is not a fact of history. This means to say that it is not a matter of "renaissances" of Hermeticism (such as those of the Hellenistic epoch which took place in the XII th century, the XV th century, the XVII th century and the XIX th century) but rather of the resurrection of Hermeticism. "Renaissances" are only reminiscences of the past which surge up to the surface from the depths of human souls from time to time, whilst resurrection signifies an appeal to present and future life, to the accomplishment of a mission for the future, addressed to what was of eternal value in the past by the same Voice which called Lazarus back to life.

The spiritual history of Christianity is the history of successive resurrections of that which is valuable from the past, worthy of eternity. It is the history of the Magic of Love reviving the dead. It was thus that Platonism became resuscitated and will go on living for ever — thanks to the vivifying breath of He who is the Resurrection and the Life ("Ego sum Resurrectio et Vita" — John xi, 25). It is thus that Aristotelianism will participate in eternal life. And it is thus that Hermeticism, also, will live until the end of the world and, perhaps, beyond the end of the world.

Moses and the Prophets will live on for ever, for they have acquired their place in the eternal constellation of the Word of Resurrection and Life. The magical poetry and songs of Orpheus will be resuscitated and will live for all eternity as color and sound of the Word of Resurrection and Life. The magic of Zarathustra's mages will be revived and will live as the eternal human endeavor of aspiration towards light and life. The truths revealed by Krishna will join the retinue of the "Recalled to eternal Life". The ancient cosmic revelations of the Rishis will live again and will awaken in humanity anew a sense for the marvels of the "Blue, White and Gilded . . . "

All these souls of mankind's spiritual history will be resuscitated, i.e. will be called to join the work of the Word that became flesh, that died and rose again from the dead — so that the truth of the promise — "I have come so that nothing should be lost but that all should have eternal life" (John vi, 38-40) — will be accomplished.

Hermeticism also is called to live — not only as a reminiscence, but also as a resuscitation. This will take place when those who are faithful to it, i.e. in whom reminiscences of its past are living — comprehend the truth that man is the k e y to the world, and that Jesus-Christ is the k e y to m a n, and that Jesus-Christ is the k e y to the w o r l d, and that the world — such as it was before the Fall and such as it will be after its Reintegration — i s t h e W o r d, and that the W o r d i s J e s u s - C h r i s t, and that, lastly, Jesus-Christ

reveals God the Father who transcends both the world and man.

Through Jesus-Christ one arrives at the Word or Logos; through the Word or Logos one understands the world; and through the Word and the world, whose unity is the Holy Spirit, one arrives at an eternally-increasing knowledge of the Father.

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This is one of the teachings of the Balance of Justice taken as a spiritual exercise. But it can give us many other teachings relating to such problems as Karma or the law of equilibrium in mankind's history and in the history of the human individuality; the problem of the relationships between Fate (historical, biological and astrological), Freedom and Providence; the problem of the three swords (of the Cherubim of Eden, the Archangel Michael and the Angel of the Apocalypse) or the problem of sanction in the work of cosmic justice; and lastly, the gnostic problem of the Ogdoad ("eightfoldness"). All these problems certainly merit treatment under the title of — or better, by means of — the Balance of Justice. Truth to tell, they not only merit it, but they badly need it. I certainly know this to be so, but I must renounce doing it, because I cannot write an entire volume on the VIIIth arcanum alone, let alone 22 volumes on the 22 Arcana of the Tarot — having undertaken to write only Letters on the Arcana. A letter must not become a volume. I must therefore renounce many — yes, the majority — of the things that I would very much like to put into writing. But I hope that the method of using the Balance of Justice (that I want only to illustrate in this Letter) will find an active and sympathetic reception and that you, dear Unknown Friend, will set to work with weighing the problems not dealt with here, by means of the Balance of Justice. In doing this, you will have, perhaps, not only the satisfaction and the joy of fresh enlightenment but also that of breathing the air of the honesty and moral courage of impartial justice. Perhaps, moreover, you will have an experience which will be a conclusive answer to the question posed at the end of the preceding Letter, namely: What is the eighth force which puts the seven forces of the astral body in equilibrium? For it is this eighth force which works in judging and weighing up by means of the Balance of Justice, in the inner forum of consciousness. It is the "eighth planet" or the unknown factor upon which so much depends in the interpretation of a traditional astrological horoscope, with seven planets, and in the interpretation of the traditional characterological formula of the composition and proportions of the psychic organism or "character". Whether it is a matter of an astrological horoscope or of a characterological formula is not important, there is always an X-factor upon the use of which astrological or characterological data depends. It is the factor of free will which underlines the traditional astrological rule: "Astra inclinant, non necessitant" ("the stars incline, they do not compel"). The same rule is valuable for "microcosmic astrology" or characterology. There also free will is the indeterminable factor which does not allow the part that a man with a well-determined character will take in some circumstances or other to be predicted with certainty. For it is not character which is the source of judgement and conscious choice, but rather this

force in us which weighs and judges by means of the Balance of Justice. Freedom is a fact which one experiences when someone judges not by his temperament ("etheric" body), or by his character ("astral" body), but rather by the Balance of Justice — or by his own con-science. The word conscience contains the idea of balance, for it implies "simultaneous knowing", i.e. knowledge of the facts of the two scales suspended at the extremities of the beam of the balance. C o n s c i e n c e (conscience, Gewissen, sovest') is neither a product nor a function of character. It is above it. And it is here — and only here — that there begins and there is found the domain of freedom. One is not at all free when one judges or acts according to character or temperament; but one certainly is when one judges and acts according to the Balance of Justice, or con-science. But Justice, the practice of the Balance, is only the beginning of a long path of the development of conscience — and therefore of the growth of freedom.

The following Arcanum, the Hermit, invites us to a meditative endeavor dedicated to the path of c o n s c i e n c e.

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Letter IX: Meditation on the ninth Major Arcanum of the Tarot:- "THE HERMIT" "L'HERMITE"

(Isis:) "Give heed, my son Horus, for you shall hear the secret doctrine, of which our forefather Kamephis was the first teacher. It so befell that Hermes heard this teaching from Kamephis, the eldest of all our race; I heard it from Hermes, the writer of the records, when he initiated me in the rite of Black (Perfection)..."
(ὅποτ' ἐμὲ καί τῳ τελείῳ μελάνι ἐτίμησε, words of Isis from the Sacred Book of Hermes Trismegistus entitled Kore Kosmu).*

"For Trismegistus who, I do not know how, has completed the discovery of virtually the entire truth, has often described the power and the majesty of the Word, as illustrated by the foregoing quotation, where he (Hermes) proclaims the existence of an ineffable and holy Word, whose pronunciation is beyond the power of man" - (quo fatetur esse ineffabilem quendem sanctumque sermonem, cuius enarratio modum hominis excedet)
Lactantius, Divinae institutiones iv, 9,3

"For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew vii, 14)

Dear Unknown Friend,

The Hermit! I am pleased to have arrived, in the series of these letter-meditations, at this venerable and mysterious figure of a solitary itinerant dressed in a red robe under a blue mantle, holding in his right hand a lantern — alternately yellow and red — and leaning on a staff. For it is the venerable and mysterious Hermit who was master of the most intimate and most cherished dreams of my youth, as moreover he is the master of dreams for all youth in every country, who are enamored by the call to seek the narrow gate and the hard way to the Divine. Can you name for me a country or a time for which the youth — who are truly "young", i.e. living for the Ideal — has not had its imagination haunted by the figure of a wise and good Father, a spiritual Father, a H e r m i t, who has passed through the narrow gate and who walks the hard way? Someone whom one could trust without reserve and whom one could venerate and love without limit? Which young Russian man,

*("The Virgin of the World"); trsl. Walter Scott, "Hermetica", vol. i, Oxford, 1924, p. 457, cf. also French trsl. by A. J. Festugière, "Corpus Hermeticum", vol. iv, Paris, 1954, p. 10, whose translation reads: "... when he honored me with the gift of Perfect Night".

for example, would not have undertaken a journey, no matter how long and of what duration, in order to meet a Staretz, i.e. a wise and good Father, a spiritual Father, a Hermit? Which young Jewish man from Poland, Lithuania, White Russia, Ukraine or Romania would not have done as much to meet a Hasidic Tsadik, a wise and good Father, a spiritual Father, a Hermit? Which young man in India would refuse to make every possible effort to find and meet a chela or Guru, a wise and good Father, a spiritual Father, a Hermit?

And was it otherwise with the youth around Origen, Clement of Alexandria, St. Benedict, St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Ignatius of Loyola? Was it otherwise, also, with the pagan youth of Athens around Socrates and Plato?

It was the same in ancient Persia around Zarathustra, Ostanes and other representatives of the spiritual dynasty of the mages that was founded by the great Zarathustra. It was also so in Israel with the schools of the prophets, and with the Nazorenes and Essenes. It was the same in ancient Egypt, where the figure of the founder of the dynasty of "wise and good Fathers" — that of Hermes Trismegistus — became, not only for Egypt but also for the entire Greco-Roman world, the prototype of the wise and good Father, the Hermit!

Eliphas LÉVI certainly sensed the universal historical meaning of the Hermit. This is why he stated the admirable formula:

> "The initiate is he who possesses the lamp of Trismegistus, the mantle of Apollonius, and the staff of the patriarchs." (Eliphas Lévi, "Dogme et rituel de la haute magie; trsl. A.E. Waite, Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual, chap. 9, London, 1968, p. 92)

In fact, the Hermit who haunts the imagination of "young" youth, the Hermit of legend and the Hermit of history was, is, and always will be the solitary man with the lamp, mantle and staff. For he possesses the gift of letting light shine in the darkness — this is his "lamp"; he has the faculty of separating himself from the collective moods, prejudices and desires of race, nation, class and family — the faculty of reducing to silence the cacophony of collectivism vociferating around him, in order to listen to and understand the hierarchical harmony of the spheres — this is his "mantle"; at the same time he possesses a sense of realism which is so developed that he stands in the domain of reality not on two feet but rather on three, i.e. he advances only after having touched the ground through immediate experience and at first-hand contact without intermediaries — this is his "staff". He creates light, he creates silence and he creates certainty — conforming to the criterion of the Emerald Table, namely the triple concordance of that which is clear, of that which is in harmony with the totality of revealed truths and of that which is the object of immediate experience:

"Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum" (Tabula Smaragdina, 1)

"Verum, sine mendacio" — this is clarity (the lamp);

"Certum" — this is the concordance of that which is clear and the totality of other truths (the "lamp" and the "mantle");

"Verissimum" — this is the concordance of that which is clear; the totality of other truths, and authentic and immediate experience (the "lamp", the "mantle" and the "staff")

The Hermit therefore represents not only a wise and good father who is a reflection of the Father in Heaven, but also the method and essence of Hermeticism. For Hermeticism is

founded on the concordance of three methods of knowledge: the a priori knowledge of intelligence (the "lamp"); the harmony of all by analogy (the "mantle"); and authentic immediate experience (the "staff").

Hermeticism is thus a threefold synthesis of three antinomies:

1. the synthesis of the antinomy "idealism – realism"
2. the synthesis of the antinomy "realism – nominalism"
3. the synthesis of the antinomy "faith – empirical science"

In so far as it is a synthesis — a personal one, of course, in the inner forum of the consciousness of each — in which the three antinomies above supply each time a third term, its number is nine, and it is the ninth Arcanum which teaches us about the three syntheses of the three antinomies.

Let us now look at how Hermeticism is the synthesis of the above three antitheses or antinomies.

1 / The antinomy "idealism - realism"

This reduces to two opposite formulas, namely:

"Consciousness or the idea is prior to everything"
this is the formula of idealism, - and -
"The thing (res) is prior to all consciousness or ideas"
is the basic formula of realism.

The idealist (e.g. HEGEL) considers everything as so many forms of thought, whilst the realist (e.g. SPENCER) affirms that objects of knowledge have an existence which is independent of thought or consciousness on the part of the subject of knowledge.

The realist says that notions, laws and ideas are <u>derived</u> — by way of abstraction — from <u>objects</u> of knowledge. The idealist says, on the contrary, that notions, laws and ideas are <u>projected</u> — by way of "concretization" — from the <u>subject</u> of knowledge into objects.

The realist advances the so-called "correspondence" theory of truth, i.e. that "truth is the correspondence between object and intellect".

The idealist relies on the so-called "coherence" theory of truth, i.e. that "truth is coherence — or absence of contradictions — in the handling of ideas, notions and objects (objects being only notions) by the intellect".

Truth is, according to realism, that which in the intellect corresponds with the object. According to idealism, truth is that which constitutes a <u>coherent system</u> in the intellect.

The entire world exactly reflected in the intellect — this is the ideal of knowledge for realism.

The entire world exactly reflecting the postulates and categories of the intellect as a unique coherent system — this is the ideal of knowledge for idealism. It is the world which bears the word and it is the human intellect which listens, says realism.

It is the intellect which bears the word and it is the world which is its reflection, says idealism.

"<u>Nihil in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu</u>" ("nothing is in the intellect which has not had prior existence in the sense world") is the millenial-old formula of realism. "<u>Nihil in sensu quod non prius fuerit in intellectu</u>" ("nothing is in the sense world which has not had prior existence in the intellect") is the counter-formula of idealism.

Which is right? Realism with its idol, i.e. the "Thing" (res) prior to thought, and its Mazdean dualism, i.e. Darkness (the Thing) and Light (Thought), which latter proceeds from or is born from the former? Or idealism with its idol of the human

intellect which it sets on the throne of God, and its pan-intellectual monism where there is room neither for the "gift of Perfect Night", i.e. the superhuman Wisdom mentioned in the Sacred Book of Hermes Trismegistus entitled K o r e K o s m o u, nor for the shadows of Evil, Ugliness and Illusion that we experience every day?

No, let us not prostrate ourselves either before the world or before the intellect, but let us prostrate ourselves in adoration of the common source of both the world and the intellect — G o d: God whose Word is at one and the same time the "true light that enlightens every man coming into the world" (John i, 9) and the creator of the world — "all things were made through him, and nothing that was made was made without him" (John i, 3).

The Thing, the world — it is the Word which is its source. The intellect, the light of thought — it is again the Word which is its source. This is why Christian Hermeticism of the present as well as the pagan Hermeticism of the past is neither merely realistic nor simply idealistic. It is l o g o i s t i c (i.e. of the Logos), being founded neither on the Thing nor on the human Intellect, but rather on the L o g o s, the Word of God, whose <u>objective</u> manifestation is the world of prototypes underlying the phenomenal world, and whose <u>subjective</u> manifestation is the light or prototype of human intelligence. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness receives it not" (John i, 5), which means to say that there is darkness both in the world and within consciousness which has not received — i.e. is not penetrated by — the light, and that consequently Evil, Ugliness and Illusion certainly exist in the world and in consciousness.

But the darkness of the world that is not penetrated by the Word is not the source of consciousness, and the human intellect that is not illumined by the Word is not the principle of the world. In the phenomenal world there are objective "illusions", i.e. "things which are <u>not real</u>" which have not been made by the Word, but which have arisen for an ephemeral existence from the sub-strata of darkness. In the domain of subjective consciousness there are illusions, i.e. notions, ideas and ideals which are <u>not real</u>, which have not been engendered by the light of the Word, but which have arisen for an ephemeral existence from the depths of darkness in the subconscious.

Now, the correspondence between an illusory object and a notion of it in the intellect would not be truth, but rather a double illusion. Realism should be aware of this when it advances its so-called "correspondence" theory of truth. And the inner coherence of an intellectual system based on illusions would not be a criterion of its truth, but rather an indication of an obsession that is so much the deeper the more the coherence is complete. Idealism should be aware of this when it advances its so-called "coherence" theory of truth.

Objects are only <u>real</u>, in the sense of realism, when they are real in the Word. And intellectual constructions are only <u>true</u>, in the sense of idealism, when they are true in the Word. The human intellect, as such, is not the producer of truth after the fashion of a spider producing its web. A fact of the outer or inner world, in so far as it is a fact, need not instate truth when it can just as well point to an illusion or the history of an illusion, be it in Nature (e.g. antediluvian monsters) or be it human (e.g. many idols of the past or present).

Now, the "world" of our experience is the phenomenal manifestation of both the world created by the Word and the evolutionary world of the Serpent. The "intellect" of our experience, also, is the manifestation both of the light of the Word and of the "ruse" (to take the Biblical term for

the method where darkness imitates light without receiving it) of the Serpent. This is why it is still necessary to distinguish, before one professes to realism, between the World and the world. Similarly, before one embraces idealism, one has to distinguish between cosmic Intelligence and the human intellect.

But once this distinction is made, one can without hesitation embrace idealism and realism at one and the same time — which would be the "idealism-realism" or the logoism of ancient and contemporary Hermeticism.

Then the method of correspondence becomes the staff in the hand of the Hermit and the method of coherence becomes the mantle which covers him. This is thanks to the light of the Hermit's lamp, which is the holy instrument where the light of the Word is united with the oil of human intellectual endeavor.

2/ The antinomy "realism-nominalism"

In this antinomy the term "realism" has nothing in common with the "realism" of the antinomy "realism-idealism". Realism here signifies the school of occidental thought which attributes objective reality to general notions that are now usually designated as "abstract" but which medieval philosophy designated "Universalia" ("Universals"). The current of occidental thought which denies the objective reality of Universals and which admits reality only in "Particulars" is that of "nominalism".

Now "realism", as a current of occidental thought opposed to nominalism, differs from realism opposed to idealism in the sense that it is a matter here of the objective reality of Universals (types and species) and not of the correspondence between notions of the intellect and the reality of objects (as the criterion of the truth). Therefore it is a question of a totally different problem. "Realists", in that which concerns the problem of the reality of Universals, are in fact extreme "idealists" in that which concerns the problem of the priority of the intellect or the object.

The problem underlying the antinomy "realism-nominalism" was posed for the first time in the history of ideas in an explicit manner by PORPHYRY (A.D. 234-ca. 304) in his "Isagoge" (or "Introduction by Porphyry the Phoenician, disciple of Plotinus of Lycopolis", to give the complete title of this little work). The problem is posed from the beginning, with all desirable clarity, as follows:-

> "...I shall put aside the investigation of certain profound questions concerning genera and species (i.e. Universals), since such an undertaking requires more detailed examination: (1) whether genera or species exist in themselves or reside in mere concepts alone; (2) whether, if they exist, they are corporeal or incorporeal; and (3) whether they exist apart or in sense objects and in dependence on them." (Porphyry, "Isagoge" i, 9-14; trsl. E.W. Warren, "Medieval Sources in Translation," vol. 16, Toronto, 1975, pp. 27-28)

In fact, from BOETHIUS to the Renaissance — and even to our own time — there has been given to this problem the "more detailed examination" which Porphyry believed that it merited. For the medieval doctors, having clearly seen that the problem of Universals is at the very center of philosophy, treated it as the central problem, which gave rise to the division of the world of philosophers into "realists" (types and species exist in themselves, above and beyond individuals) and "nominalists" (types and species do not exist beyond individuals; they are only "names", i.e. words useful for the purpose of classification). A third school — that of the "conceptualists" or, according to the case, "moderate realists" or "moderate nominalists" (general ideas certainly exist, but they exist only in the mind of he who conceives them) — originated during the controversy and played a role, not of synthesis, but rather one similar to the role of Lorraine which the Emperor Lothar I assigned to it, namely that of intermediary between France and Germany.

The passionate controversy between realism and nominalism lasted a millennium and, not restricting itself to learned debates, it took diverse forms, including the decisions of Church councils, as for example the council of Soissons, which condemned nominalism in 1092.

The thesis of the "realists" leads back to Plato, to his doctrine of ideas. That of the "nominalists" is associated with ANTISTHENES: "I see a horse, but I don't see horseness" (cf. W.K.C. Guthrie, "A History of Greek Philosophy", vol. iii, Cambridge, 1969, p. 214).

Now, the essence of the problem is whether "horseness" is anterior to the individual horses (universale ante rem), whether it is immanent in the individual horses (universale in re) or whether it is, lastly, posterior to the individual horses and is only derived from them by way of abstraction (universale post rem). According to PLATO, "horseness" exists as an idea before the horses; according to ARISTOTLE, "horseness" exists only in the horses as the principle of their form; according to the conceptualists (e.g. KANT), "horseness" is a concept formed by the mind by way of summarizing the common features of all horses, abstracting from the particular characteristics (universale post rem).

The problem of whether "horseness" is anterior to the real horses, whether it is the formative principle in them or, rather, whether it is only a notion of the mind derived from the experience of the senses is, truth to tell, not passionate when it is a matter only of "horseness". Nevertheless, it becomes so when it is a question of mankind or the world. For then it becomes a problem of c r e a t i o n, which differs from G e n e s i s. In creation the idea or "plan" of the world is anterior to the act of its realization, whilst in genesis or evolution there is not an idea or plan anterior to the fact, but rather a force immanent in substances and individual beings, which pushes them to seek through trial and error a way of progressing. With respect to humanity, it becomes a problem of the prototype man or celestial A d a m, i.e. a problem of the creation of man or his evolutionary genesis.

Let us now examine more closely the fundamental theses of realism and nominalism.

"The general is anterior to the particular" – is the formula at the basis of realism.

"The particular is anterior to the general" – is the counter-formula of nominalism.

These two contrary theses imply that for realism the general is more real and of higher objective value than the particular, and that for nominalism the particular is more real and of higher objective value than the general. In other words, for realism humanity is more real and is of higher value than the individual man. In contrast, for nominalism it is the individual man who is more real and has a higher value than humanity.

For realism, there would be no human beings if there were no humanity. For nominalism, on the contrary, there would be no humanity if there were no human beings.

Human beings compose humanity, says the nominalist.

Humanity engenders, from its invisible but real womb, individual human beings, says the realist.

Who is right? Realism with its idol of collectivity anterior to the individuality, the individual soul, which, through the mouth of CAIAPHAS enunciated the justification for condemning Jesus Christ to death, in having said: "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" – (John xi, 50 and John xviii, 14) – ?... which through the tribunals of the Inquisition annihilated "noxious individuals" in sacrificing them for the interests of humanity or the Church?... Realism which, lastly, setting the race above individuals or the class above individuals, exterminated millions of Jews and gypsys at the hands of the Nazis, and also millions of "koulaks" or well-to-do peasants and individuals of the higher classes at the hands of the Bolsheviks? –

And nominalism?

Nominalism is blind to ideas and principles, which are only words as far as it is concerned. Truth, Beauty and Goodness do not exist for it as objective realities, and are only a matter of

taste. No serious science or philosophy worthy of its name would be able to exist if nominalism were the only intellectual terrain in which it could live. For instead of aspiring to the universal, it would go in search of the particular. It would collect only particular facts and, far from setting any value on their common traits from which it would be able to derive laws and principles, would only result in a kind of museum of particular facts. This museum would wait in vain for the advent of scientific and philosophical thought in order for it to be useful to mankind in a general way: nominalism itself would not produce it. For it is the opposite of science.

Instead of science or philosophy, it would give rise to a multitude of sects of subjective tastes. Each would think and believe in its own way. One would only adhere to that which pleased one.

This is precisely why the Church condemned nominalism as a doctrine and why science banished it as a method. It would have atomized the Church into a mass of small religions according to the personal taste of each individual, and it would have reduced science to sterile collectionism and an infinite number of private opinions.

Therefore we cannot dispense with realism if we attach any value to the existence of objective truth (science) and trans-subjective truth (religion). Objective and trans-subjective truth must therefore be admitted if one aspires to a union of mankind in the universal objective truth of science and trans-subjective truth of religion.

But can we do without nominalism?

No, for nominalism is a vision of the world consisting of individual, unique and irreplaceable beings. It is a vision of the world as a great community of entities, instead of a world of laws, principles and ideas. It is a vision of the world where Father, Son and Holy Spirit, true and living persons, united by the eternal bonds of Paternity, Filiality and Fraternity, reign — surrounded by Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels, human beings and beings of Nature, visible and invisible. How can one say, with all sincerity of the heart, in prayer addressed to the Father in heaven: "Hallowed be thy name", without believing that it is the unique and holy name of a living being — unique and holy, and not a designation for the supreme idea or the "first cause" or the "absolute principle"? Can one l o v e an invisible world of impersonal "first causes", a world populated by laws and principles?!

If general intellectual knowledge of the world as such (i.e. Science) and as the work of God (i.e. philosophy) is not possible without idealistic realism, intuitive individual knowledge — through love — of particular beings (i.e. Mysticism, Gnosis and Magic) is no more so without realistic nominalism.

Now, one can neither embrace idealistic realism or realistic nominalism without reserve, nor dispense with one or the other. For love (which demands realistic nominalism) as well as the intellect (which demands idealistic realism) are structural faculties of human nature. Human nature itself is realist, in so far as thought is concerned, and it is nominalist, in so far as social communion or love is concerned.

The "problem" of Universals was resolved in the spiritual history of mankind by the fact of the Incarnation, where the fundamental Universal of the world — the Logos — became Jesus-Christ, who is the fundamental Particular of the world. Here, the Universal of Universals, the very principle of intelligibility, the Logos, became the Particular of Particulars, the very prototype of the personality, Jesus-Christ.

It is above all the Gospel according to St. John which portrays in an explicit and clear way the fact of the union of the Principle of universal knowledge with the Being of individual love, from heart to heart. This Gospel describes the work of Divine Alchemy, where Water is united with Fire — where Water became Living Water, and tongues of Fire became the Pentecostal tongues

understandable to everyone individually. The substance of Baptism — vivified water and fire not consuming the particular but enabling it to participate in eternity — is the outcome of the work of Redemption that began with the Incarnation. Baptism is — in the domain of the history of the spirit — also the union of realism and nominalism, the union of the head and the heart in the human being, which union is only the reflection of the fact of the Incarnation, where "the Word became flesh".

Christian Hermeticism is the friend of realistic nominalism, in so far as this form of nominalism aspires to mystical experience of the communion of beings through love, as well as of idealistic realism, in so far as the latter aspires to the Logos. Christian Hermeticism itself can only be knowledge of the universal which is revealed in the particular. For Hermeticism there are no "principles", "laws" and "ideas" which exist <u>outside</u> of individual beings, not as structural traits of their nature, but as entities separated and independent from it. For Hermeticism there is neither a "<u>law</u> of gravitation" nor a "<u>law</u> of reincarnation"; there is only the attraction and repulsion of <u>beings</u> (atoms are beings also) in so far as gravitation is concerned, and only the attraction of beings to earthly life, with its joys and sorrows, in so far as reincarnation is concerned. But on the other hand, if there were no such entities in the world as the laws of gravitation and reincarnation, there is certainly the universal desire of beings — great and small — to associate with one another, to form together molecules, organisms, families, communities, nations ... It is a desire or universal <u>structural</u> need which manifests itself as "law". "Laws" are <u>immanent</u> in beings, as logic is immanent in thought, being part of the very nature of thought. And true progress, true evolution is the advance of beings from life under one law to life under another law, i.e. the structural change of beings. It is thus that the law "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" is in the process of being gradually replaced by the law of forgiveness. It is thus again that the law "the weak serve the strong, the people serve the king, the disciple serves the master" will one day give way to the law shown by the Master through the act of the Washing of the Feet. According to this higher law, it is the strong who serve the weak, the king who serves the people, the master who serves the disciple — just as it is in heaven, where Angels serve human beings, Archangels serve Angels and men, Principalities serve Archangels, Angels and human beings, and so on. And God? He serves all beings without exception.

Thus the "law" of the <u>struggle for existence</u> that Darwin observed in the domain of biology will one day cede its place to the law of <u>cooperation for existence</u> which exists already in the cooperation of flowering plants and bees, in the cooperation of different cells in an organism, and in cooperation in the human social organism.

The end of the "law" of the struggle for existence and the future triumph of the law of cooperation for life has been foretold by the prophet ISAIAH:

> "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
> And the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
> And the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
> And a little child shall lead them."
> (Isaiah xi, 6)

This will be, because the new "law" — i.e. a profound change in the psychic and physical structure of beings — will replace the old "law", firstly in consciousness, then in desires and affections, then lastly in the organic structure of beings.

"Laws" succeed one another and change. They are not immutable metaphysical entities. It is the same with respect to "principles" and "ideas". "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the sabbath" - (Mark ii, 27-28) --

here is the relationship between beings, on the one side, and laws, principles and ideas, on the other.

Are laws, principles and ideas therefore not real?

They are certainly real, but their reality is not that of an existence separate from beings, i.e. that of metaphysical entities populating a world or plane — a world of laws, principles and ideas — proper to themselves. The spiritual world is not a world of laws, principles and ideas; it is a world of spiritual beings — human souls, Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim and the Holy Trinity: the Holy Spirit, the Son and the Father.

What, then, is the reality of laws, principles and ideas?

It is in their structural kinship — spiritual, psychic and corporeal. All beings manifest a universal kinship and bear witness to their common origin and their common archetype. Now, this common archetype — that the Cabbala calls "A d a m K a d m o n" — is the law, the principle and the idea of all beings." The image and likeness of God "in Adam is the law by virtue of which God "let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Genesis i,26). Adam is the law, the principle and the idea of all the beings of Nature, because he is their prototype-synthesis.

Realism is right when it affirms the reality of Universals, for they are the structural features of the Archetype for all particular beings. Also, nominalism is right when it teaches that there are no other realities in the world than individual beings and that Universals are not to be found amongst these beings.

Hermeticism regards the Logos who became man as the Archetypal Universal become the perfect particular Being. The controversy between realism and nominalism does not exist for Christian Hermeticism.

3. - The antinomy "faith - empirical science"

> "For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard, you will say to this mountain: Move hence to yonder place — and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you" (Matthew xvii, 20-21) — these are the words of the Master.
>
> "And Science takes a grain of hydrogen and releases the energy imprisoned in this grain, and reduces the mountain to dust" — replies the twentieth century.

This is where we are with respect to the antinomy of Faith and empirical science.

Our faith does not transport mountains, but the energy that we have learned to wield through science is quite capable of reducing them to dust.

Is it because we do not have a mustard-grain of faith?

Is it because we have concentrated all our efforts on the task of penetrating the secret contained in a grain of hydrogen instead of the task of acquiring faith as in a grain of mustard?

In order to be able to answer these questions we must first take account of what faith is and what empirical science is.

Faith

Faith which can — when it is as a grain of mustard seed — transport mountains, is this faith identical with faith-belief, with the feeling of certainty with regard to a doctrine? - Is it identical with faith-confidence, with the absence of doubt with respect to the sureness of the authority of a witness or testimony? - Is it, lastly, identical with faith-hope, with optimism as opposed to pessimism?

Briefly, is it sufficient that we have no doubt at all in order to realize "nothing will be impossible to you"?

Many mad people certainly display a complete absence of doubt with regard to their illusions or fixed ideas. They would therefore be able to do miracles, if faith was nothing other than intensity of belief, confidence and hope, due to the absence of doubt. Because mad people certainly have this intensity.

However, the intensity of belief, confidence and hope alone is not the faith that the Gospel has in view. There it is evidently a question not only of the intensity of certainty, but rather the intensity of the certainty of the truth. If this were not so, mad people would be thaumaturgists and madness would be the ideal.

A force which can move a mountain must be equal to that which piled it up. Therefore, the faith which can move mountains can neither be an intellectual opinion nor a personal feeling, no matter how intense. It must be the product of the union of the thinking, feeling and desiring human being with cosmic being — with God.

The faith which moves mountains is therefore complete union — even if only for an instant — of man and God.

This is why illusion can in no way engender faith; and this is also why miracles due to faith are testimonies of the truth — and not only of sincerity — of belief, confidence and hope of the person through whom they are operated. Miracles are fruits of the union of the whole, concentrated human being with cosmic Truth, Beauty and Goodness — with G o d. They are operations of divine-human magic which is, and always will be, based on the spiritual constellation "G o d - M a n" — or, in other words, they always operate "in the name of Jesus-C h r i s t", conforming to the formula:-

> My Father is working still, and I am working. (ὁ πατήρ μου ἕως ἀρτι ἐργάζεται, κἀγὼ ἐργάζομαι. — Pater meus usque modo operatur, et ego operor.) (John v,17)

The faith for which "nothing is impossible" is the state of soul where "God works, and the soul also works". It is the state of soul concentrated on the truth to which God adds the intensity of certainty and the power which renders miracles possible. It is magic due to the union of two mages: God and man.

It is therefore neither logical certainty, nor the certainty of authority, nor the acceptance of a testimony worthy of faith — it is the union of the soul with God, attained through effort of thought, through confidence in that which is worthy of confidence, through accepting testimonies worthy of faith, through prayer, meditation, contemplation, through practicing moral endeavor, and through many other ways and endeavors which help the soul open to the divine Breath.

F a i t h is divine B r e a t h in the soul, just as H o p e is divine L i g h t and L o v e is divine F i r e in the soul.

Empirical Science.

Heat, steam, magnetism, electricity, nuclear energy — such are the powerful forces harnessed by man thanks to the prodigious work of empirical science! It is thanks to science that we are able to converse with our friends across the ocean, to see what takes place thousands of miles away, to visit a sick friend in another country within an hour, to call to our aid, when we are in distress at sea, in the mountains or in the desert, life-saving expeditions: planes, boats, ambulances. It is again thanks to science that we are able to hear the voice of someone who has been dead for years, that we are able to walk despite having lost a leg, that we are able to see far although being myopic, that we are able to hear whilst being almost deaf, and that we

have the capacity for many other things, all of which are thanks to empirical science.

To what may the fabulous success which science achieves be attributed? What is the basic principle which can explain it?

It is doubt in the first place. For it is thanks to doubting the experience of the senses that science has been able to establish that it is not the sun which moves across the sky but rather the earth which moves around it. It is thanks to doubting all-powerful fate that remedies and methods of treatment for healing formerly incurable illnesses were sought for and found. It is again thanks to doubting past traditions that empirical science discovered biological evolution, hormones, enzymes, vitamins, the structure of the atom, and subconscious consciousness...

For doubt is at the very root of every question, and questions are the basis of every quest and all research. Doubt is therefore the father of the scientific method. It is this which is the "primus motor", the principle which once set in motion the whole prodigious machine consisting of laboratories, observatories, libraries, museums, collections, universities, scientific academies and associations.

Doubt set it all in motion. But is the fruitfulness of the motion to be attributed to doubt alone? Does doubt alone suffice for discoveries? Is it not necessary to believe in the possibility of such discoveries before one sets out on the route which leads to them?

Evidently this is necessary. The father of empirical science is doubt and its mother is faith. It owes its fruitfulness to faith, just as it owes its motivating force to doubt.

Just as there is "scientific doubt" underlying empirical science as a method, so there is a "scientific faith" which underlies science as the principle of its fruitfulness. Newton doubted the traditional theory of "gravity", but he believed in the unity of the world, and therefore in cosmic analogy. This is why he could arrive at the cosmic law of gravitation in consequence of the fact of an apple falling from a tree. Doubt set his thought in motion; faith rendered it fruitful.

What, therefore, are the dogmas of scientific faith? The following is the scientific creed:-

"I believe in a single substance, the mother of all forces, which engenders bodies and the consciousness of everything, visible and invisible.

I believe in a single Lord, the Human Mind, the unique son of the substance of the world, born from the substance of the world after centuries of evolution: the encapsulated reflection of the great world, the epiphenomenal light of primordial darkness, the real reflection of the real world — evolved through trial and error, not engendered or created, consubstantial with the mother-substance — and through whom the whole world can be reflected. It is he who — for we human beings, and for our use — has ascended from the shadows of the mother-substance.

He has taken on flesh from matter through the work of evolution, and he has become the Human Brain.

Although he is destroyed with each generation that passes, he is formed anew in each generation following, according to Heredity. He is summoned to ascend to comprehensive knowledge of the whole world and to be seated at the right of the mother-substance, which will serve him in his mission as judge and legislator, and his reign will never end.

I believe in Evolution, which directs all, which gives life to the inorganic and consciousness to the organic, which proceeds from the mother-substance and fashions the thinking mind. With the mother-substance and the human mind, evolution receives equal authority and importance. It has spoken through universal progress.

I believe in one diligent, universal, civilizing Science. I acknowledge a single discipline for

the elimination of errors and I await the future fruits of collective efforts of the past for the life of civilization to come. -- So be it. "- -

These are the twelve articles of scientific faith, which is based not only on scientific effort throughout the centuries but also on the martyrdom undergone by numerous human beings in the name of science.

Compare this creed with the traditional Christian Creed, article by article, and the whole significance of the antinomy "faith - empirical science" will be evident.

The synthesis.

The unique substance at the basis of the multiplicity of phenomena; the human mind capable of reducing this multiplicity to a unity; the evolution to which the human mind owes its existence, and the collaboration with which it promises to the human mind its future development until it becomes master of evolution; the collective and organized effort, according to the method of doubt and empirical verification continued from century to century — these are the four principal dogmas of scientific faith.

Substance, the human mind, evolution and the scientific method constitute the four "letters" of the Tetragrammaton of the "ineffable name" of science.

ELIPHAS LÉVI made much of a case for the role which the name H V H Y (Havajot) — which is an inversion of the sacred Tetragrammaton Y H V H — plays in being used in black magical evocations. As the Tetragrammaton is the law of causality (the sequence: active principle, passive principle, neutral principle — and their manifestation; or again: effective cause, material cause, final cause — and the phenomenon) and consequently of reason, he concluded that the inversion of the Tetragrammaton is the magical formula for chaos and irrationality.

Yet it is precisely the inverted Tetragrammaton which is the arcanum of empirical science. Because it is the passive principle of substance or matter which empirical science considers as first, as the "principle" par excellence, whilst the neutral principle (the human mind) follows, and the active principle (the method) concludes the series. In fact, in the name YOD - HÉ - VAV-HÉ (יהוה), if YOD is the active principle (effective cause), the first HÉ is the passive principle (material cause), VAV is the neutral principle (final cause) and the second HÉ is the whole phenomenon which results from it, then the inverse name HÉ- VAV-HÉ-YOD (והיה) would be the series: "passive principle — neutral principle — passive principle - active principle" or "matter, reason, evolution, scientific method".

The series H V H Y means to say that nothing precedes matter; that nothing moves it; that it moves from itself; that mind is the child of matter; that evolution is matter which engenders mind; and that, lastly, mind, once born, is the activity of matter in evolution, which becomes conscious of itself and takes evolution in its hands.

Now, the inverted Tetragrammaton is without doubt the formula-synthesis of empirical science. Is it that of chaos and irrationality?

No. It is the mirroring of the formula spirit-matter-evolution-individuality of the "sacred name" Y H V H. It is not the formula of irrationality, no more than it is that of intelligence — it is the formula of cunning ("ruse"), i.e. of reflected intelligence.

It is not a logoical formula, a formula of the Logos, but rather it is that of the Serpent of Genesis "who was the most cunning of all living creatures" (Genesis iii, 1), and whose aspiration is the expansion of consciousness in the horizontal ("the fields"). The ultimate aim

of the logic of cunning, that of the Serpent, is not to become God but to become "like God". "To become like" — this is the essence of cunning and is also the meaning of scientific faith, the scientific creed, which is at the same time only a paraphrase and development of the promise of the Serpent: "your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis iii, 5).

To open your eyes, to be like gods, knowing good and evil — this is the great arcanum of empirical science. This is why it is dedicated to the cause of enlightenment ("open your eyes", for the horizontal); this is why it aspires to absolute power for man ("be like gods"); and this is why, lastly, it is intrinsically amoral or morally neutral ("knowing good and evil").

Does it deceive us? No. It opens our eyes in fact, and thanks to it we see more in the horizontal; it gives us power over Nature in fact, and makes us sovereign over Nature; it is useful to us in fact, no matter whether for good or for evil.

Empirical science in no way deceives us. The Serpent has not lied — on the plane where its voice and promise were audible.

On the plane of horizontal expansion ("the fields" of Genesis) the Serpent certainly keeps its promise... but at what price with regard to other planes, and with regard to the vertical?

What is the price of scientific enlightenment, this "opening of the eyes" in the horizontal, i.e. for the quantitative aspect of the world? It is at the price of the obscuration of its qualitative aspect. The more one has "open eyes" for quantity, the more one becomes blind to quality. Yet all that one understands by "spiritual world" is only quality, and all experience of the spiritual world is due to "eyes that are open" for quality, for the vertical aspect of the world. Thus number has only a qualitative meaning in the spiritual world. "One" signifies unity, "two" — duality, "three" — trinity, and "four" — the duality of dualities. The v e r t i c a l world, the spiritual world, is that of values and, as the "value of values" is the individual being, it is a world of individual beings or entities. Angels, Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim are so many individualized values or entities. And the supreme value is the supreme Entity — G o d.

Science reduces quality to quantity. This is what it calls "knowledge". Thus the prismatic colors — red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet — lose for science their quality of redness, orangeness, etc., and become quantities, i.e. numbers expressing different frequencies or wavelengths of the vibration that one calls "light". Light, also, is reduced to quantity. It is only a formula expressing quantitative factors of the vibration of something deprived of all quality.

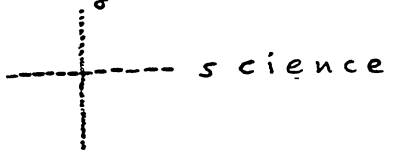
Is it necessary, therefore, to turn one's back on empirical science because it accomplishes the promise of the Serpent — in opening one's eyes to the quantitative world at the price of making us blind to the qualitative world?

What should one do, confronted with the choice between science and religion?

But is it necessary to choose? Does it not suffice to give each of these two aspirations its place — not that which they arrogate to themselves, but that which is their proper place?

In fact, if there is not a religious empirical science or a scientific religion, there are religious scientists and scientific believers. In order to be a religious scientist or a scientific believer honestly, i.e. without compromising one's conscience, it is necessary to

add to the definite horizontal aspiration the definite vertical aspiration, i.e. to live under the sign of the cross:-



This means to say that one separates the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the world in a clear way, and that one takes account of the precise difference between the function of a mechanism and the action of a sacrament. For the whole world has its mechanical side and its sacramental side. Moses describes the sacramental world in the book of Genesis; modern astronomy is in the process of describing the world-machine. The one speaks to us of the "What" and the other of the "How" of the world. The "how" is the mechanism; the "what" is the essence. The mechanism is knowable through quantity; the essence is revealed by quality.

And the scientific creed? How does one reconcile it with the Christian creed?... because it is not the expression of belief in quantity alone, but it is also — and above all — that of belief in values contrary to those of the Christian creed.

I have no other answer than the following:--

Crucify the Serpent. Put the Serpent — or the scientific creed — on the cross of Religion and Science, and a metamorphosis of the Serpent will follow. The scientific creed then becomes what it is in reality: the mirroring of the creative Word. It will no longer be truth; it will be method. It will no longer say: "in the beginning was substance or matter", but it will say: "in order to understand the mechanism of the made world, it is necessary to choose a method which takes account of the origin of matter and of that which set it in motion from above". And it will no longer say: "the brain produces consciousness", but it will say: "in order to understand the function of the brain, it is necessary to consider it in such a way as if consciousness is caused by it".

The first metamorphosis of scientific faith will therefore be the transformation of its metaphysical dogmas into methodological postulates. Its denial of God, of the creation, and of ante-phenomenal spirit, will become the method of the "ignorant scientist" (or "docta ignorantia", to use the expression of Nicholas CUSANUS (1401-1464)), which is nothing other than concentration on the domain which is proper to it.

This metamorphosis will be followed sooner or later by another, namely that of changing the very will which manifests itself in scientific faith. The will-to-power, aspiring to unlimited growth of man's domination of Nature, no matter whether for good or evil, will gradually lose its moral indifference and will become more and more inclined to good — it will be transformed into the will-to-service. It is thus that scientific faith will undergo an alchemical transmutation and that empirical science will cease to be amoral or morally indifferent. It will side with what is constructive, with what serves the health, life and well-being of humanity. After this, it will be open to all the innovations in its method that particular tasks call for, and it will one day, finally devote itself to the constructive vital forces of the world with the same zeal and intensity that today it devotes to forces of destruction (heat due to combustion, electricity due to decomposition or friction, nuclear energy due to the destruction of

atoms...). This in its turn will call for changes in scientific method in the sense that wishful ignorance of the spiritual world will be abandoned as out of date...

But all this will not be able to take place until a number of scientists have "set the bronze serpent on a pole", i.e. to add, first of all in the inner forum of consciousness, the vertical of Religion to the horizontal of empirical Science. This will neutralize the poison of scientific faith and transform it into a servant of life.

It is the divine counsel that was given to Moses in the desert, between Mount Hor and the land of Edom, that I am referring to here.

> "Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole; and if a serpent bit any man, he would look at the bronze serpent and live." (Numbers xxi,9)

It is also we, who are in the desert of the present day, who have need of the bronze Serpent set on a pole, in order to look at it and thus save our spiritual life.

The synthesis of science and religion is not a theory, but rather the inner act of consciousness of adding the spiritual vertical to the scientific horizontal or, in other words, — the act of erecting the bronze Serpent.

It should be said that this is not only Biblical advice or the pious desire of a solitary man afflicted by the ravages that scientific faith, supported by the success of empirical science, has brought to bear upon mankind's spiritual life, but rather it is already an accomplished fact. And it is France which has had the honor of giving birth to and contributing to the education of the great contemporary scientist Pierre TEILHARD DE CHARDIN (who is at the same time Father Pierre Teilhard de Chardin) who, knowing the situation from both sides, has erected high the bronze serpent in our time. His "Phenomenon of Man", just as with all his works (published in five volumes), is the realized synthesis of the antinomy "faith — empirical science", in the sense that a true scientist who was a true believer succeeded through his life's work in uniting the horizontal of science (and what a horizontal!) with the vertical of religion (and what a vertical!).

It should still be added that he is not alone, and that there are many others who look at the bronze Serpent and who thereby conserve LIFE.

With respect to ourselves — Hermeticists — here we are brought up against a work which would have been due to be accomplished by us, but which was not because we have not wanted to embrace wholeheartedly either the cause of science and its discipline or that of religion and its discipline. We insisted upon a science for ourselves and a faith for ourselves. This is why no one amongst us was able to fully erect the bronze Serpent for our age. Because to be able to do this he would have to be simultaneously a true scientist according to the rules of Academia and a true believer according to the criteria of the Church.

Who amongst us has not — at least in his youth — applauded the maxim boldly stated by PAPUS: "Neither Voltaire, nor Loyola!" -? This means to say: neither doubt nor faith.

Well, the result is that we doubt a little and we believe a little. We do not have enough critical spirit where we ought to have it, and yet we have enough to render our faith lame when it is a matter of accepting without reserve the spiritual values offered for our appraisal. In practice, "neither Voltaire, nor Loyola" means to say "a little Voltaire and a little Loyola", because one cannot do entirely without doubt and faith.

And there is one — I still have Father Pierre Teilhard de CHARDIN in mind — who had the courage to say "both Voltaire and Loyola", and to be a true scientist at the same time as being a Jesuit. He heroically accepted the cross of "Voltairian" doubt and "Ignatian" faith. The result is a light-filled vision of the world evolving through the impulse of the Serpent towards a final aim set by Providence.

Let us also not fear, therefore, to become like "the Hermit" of the Tarot, who is clothed in the habit of faith and whose doubt fathoms the ground — with his staff! The light of the lamp which he holds is that which is emitted from the opposition of f a i t h and d o u b t !

The gift of Black Perfection (or The gift of Perfect Night).

The Arcana of the Tarot, I must stress, are spiritual exercises. And the ninth Arcanum, "the Hermit", is one of them.

For this reason the preceding meditations on the three antinomies aim not so much at a solution of the antinomies that will please everyone, but more to encourage spiritual endeavor orientated towards the solution of these antinomies. You can certainly resolve them in a more profound and satisfying way. It is a matter, in the case of the solutions that I have proposed above, above all of a concrete illustration (which is, I know, far from being the best) of an individual endeavor by way of a special spiritual exercise. This consists in setting before you a thesis and an antithesis, both as clearly as possible — I should say: as crystallized light — in such a way that all intellectual light which is at your disposal may then be consumed by these two opposing theses. You will then arrive at a state of mind in which all that you know and clearly perceive is put into the thesis and its antithesis, so that they may be like two rays of light, whilst your mind itself is plunged into darkness. You know and see nothing more than the light of these two contrary theses; beyond them there remains only darkness.

And it is then that one undertakes the essential thing about this exercise, namely the endeavor to draw light from darkness, i.e. an effort aiming at knowledge which appears to you to be not only unknown but also unknowable.

In fact, every serious antinomy signifies psychologically: "the light that I possess is polarized at two poles; between these two luminous poles there is only darkness". Now, it is from this darkness that the solution to the antinomy, the s y n t h e s i s, must be drawn. It is necessary to create light from darkness. One could say that it is a matter of an act analogous to the "F i a t l u x" ("Let there be light", Genesis i, 3) of the first day of Creation.

Experience teaches us that there are two kinds of darkness in the domain of consciousness. One is that of ignorance, passivity and laziness, which is "infra-light" darkness. The other, in contrast, is the darkness of higher knowledge, intense activity and endeavor still to be made — this is "ultra-light". It is a question of this latter "darkness" in instances where it is a matter of resolving an antinomy or finding a synthesis.

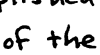
Modern Hermetic literature (of the XIX th and XX th centuries) takes account of the "neutralization of binaries", i.e. the method where one finds the t h i r d term, or neutral term, for the two terms ("binary") corresponding to the active and passive principles. Thus you will find in PAPUS' "Traité élémentaire de science occulte" (Paris,

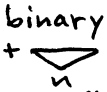
1888, p.121) the following examples of this "neutralization":

Father (+) - Mother (-) - Child (n)
Light (+) - Darkness (-) - Twilight (n)
Sun (+) - Moon (-) - Mercury (n)

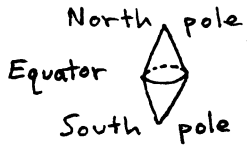
The method of the "neutralization of binaries" (the term was in use in Russia; I am not sure if it is used in France) is generally considered by Hermetic and occultist authors as the traditional method of Hermeticism.

Now, a binary can be "neutralized" in three different ways: 1) above (synthesis); 2) in the horizontal (compromise); and 3) below (mixture). Neutralization above takes place when one finds the neutral term on a plane higher than the plane of the binary itself:-

Horizontal neutralization is accomplished by finding the median term between the two terms of the binary on the plane of the binary itself: 

Neutralization below is effected when one reduces the binary to a third term on a plane lower than that of the binary, by way of mixing:- 

In order to illustrate the three ways of "neutralization" of binaries, the "colored body" (Farbenkörper) of the German scientist Wilhelm OSTWALD (cf. "Die farben fibel", Leipzig, 1916) will serve us as an example.



Ostwald's "colored body" is formed by two cones: This body therefore has a "north pole", a "south pole" and an "equator".

The "north pole" is the white point which is the synthesis of all colors. It is this white light which is more and more differentiated as it progressively descends towards the Equator. There the colors attain their maximum differentiation and individual intensity. Thus, for example, red is only present in potentiality at the point of the "north pole", then it becomes pinkish as it comes a degree lower, then rose, then reddish, before becoming bright red when it reaches the "equator". The "equator" therefore consists of seven colors (the seven colors of the visible spectrum) at their maximum intensity.

These same colors, in continuing their descent from the "equator" towards the "south pole", gradually lose their chromatic light and become darker. When they reach the "south pole" they lose all distinction and become equally black. The "south pole" is therefore the black point of the "colored body", just as the "north pole" is the "white point". The "white point" is the synthesis of all the colors; it is their "neutralization above", in the light. The "equator" is the region of maximum distinction between the colors. It is there that the transition from one color to another can be established. It is the region where "horizontal neutralization" can be effected. The "black point", lastly, is that of the confusion of all colors, where they are lost in darkness. It is the region of "neutralization below".

OSTWALD's "colored body", invented by its maker towards useful ends in the colored fabrics and textile industry, allows the "latitude and longitude" of every nuance and degree of intensity of each color to be shown precisely, and can therefore be useful — certainly without the knowledge of its inventor — for Hermetic meditations as an important basis for a chain of analogies.

We are able by analogy, therefore, to conceive of the "white point" or "north pole" of

the colored body as that of wisdom, the "equator" as that of the family of particular sciences of human knowledge, and the "black point" or "s o u t h pole" as that of ignorance. Now, wisdom is the synthesis above of all the particular sciences of human knowledge. It contains them simultaneously, undifferentiated within itself, as white light contains the seven prismatic colors. The "neutralization" or synthesis of the binary "yellow-blue", for example, can therefore be effected by rising towards the "white point" of wisdom.

Another method of finding a third term for the binary "yellow-blue" is that of finding the point of transition from yellow to blue on the scale on the equator of prismatic colors, which is exactly at the middle of the distance separating the "most yellow point" from the "most blue point". This would be the g r e e n point.

Lastly, there is the 3rd method of "neutralization" — that in the direction beneath the equator. This is the direction towards the "black point", where the particular colors disappear into darkness. The "neutralization" of the binary "yellow-blue" is therefore effected, according to this method, when a point on the scale of the reversed Cone of the "colored body" is found, where yellow and blue cease to be discernible in the dark brown which they become.

If we now take instead of the binary "yellow-blue" that of "mathematics-descriptive science" or "mathematics-phenomenalism", and apply the three methods of "neutralization" here, we obtain a formula of transcendental synthesis, another that is a compromise or equilibrium, and a 3rd that is indifferent, as follows:

1) Transcendental synthesis: "God geometrizes; numbers are the creators of phenomena" (the formula of Plato and the Pythagoreans);
2) Equilibrium: "The world is order, i.e. phenomena display limits due to the equilibrium that we call measure, number and weight" (the formula of Aristotle and the Peripatetics);
3) Indifference: "Our mind reduces phenomena to numbers so as to make it easier for the work of the mind to handle them" (formula of the sceptics).

We see, therefore, that Platonism is orientated towards the "white point" of wisdom, Aristotelianism moves in the "equatorial" region of precise distinctions, and scepticism tends towards the "black point" of nihilism.

With respect to Hermeticism, the Hermit holds the lamp which represents the "luminous point" of transcendental synthesis; he is wrapped in a mantle, hanging in folds, for deploying the particular qualities which have their place in the region of the "equator"; and he supports himself with a staff for feeling his way in the domain of darkness, in the region of the reversed cone culminating in the "black point". He is therefore a Peripatetic Platonist (en route around the "equator"), making use of scepticism (his "staff") while he walks. This is why the traditional interpretation of the ninth Arcanum is P r u d e n c e.

Prudence is constant awareness of being between two darknesses — the darkness of the "white point" of absolute synthesis above, which is dazzling and which demands a slow and gradual spiritual preparation in order to be able to bear its light without being blinded, and the darkness of the black point, that of the subconscious below. Prudence is at the same time "mobile concentration" proceeding from one particular color to another in the "equatorial" region between

the two opposite poles. It is wrapped in the mantle of their "synopsis" not as a knowledge that is ever-present in the mind, but rather as the background of each particular branch of knowledge — as the certainty of faith in the unity which certainly envelops it and with which it is clothed, but which is open at the front to make room for the use of the lamp (orientated vision) and the staff (concentrated touch).

Prudence does not entail a vision that is always present in the mind, either of the "white" point of synthesis, or of the "synopsis" of the rainbow of colors. It is an enveloping presence, as the Subconscious envelops the conscious, and is present only as a force of orientation, as a directing inclination and fundamental impulse in relation to the Conscious. Prudence never elaborates an "absolute system" for synthesizing all knowledge. It is occupied only with particular problems on the basis of their synthesis present at deeper levels of consciousness. A general all-embracing synthesis is formed on another level of consciousness than that where the conscious self ("I") performs intellectual work. It is thus that the prudent Hermit would be able to offer you dozens of answers to dozens of questions, giving them spontaneously and without apparent care for their mutual agreement, and you would have the impression that each particular answer is absolutely "ad hoc" and that it is in no way due to a preconceived intellectual system. You will ask, perhaps, if this is not a matter of "intellectual poetry", such that each particular answer appears spontaneously and ingenuously, although it may certainly be appropriate and conclusive.

This would be the first impression. However, after thought and reflection, you would find that all these spontaneous and well-intentioned "ad hoc" answers disclose a "whole", an organism of synthesis behind them, and that they are in essence prodigiously married, and in essence constitute only a single articulated "word".

Then you will understand the role played by the mantle enveloping the Hermit, when he employs his lamp for seeing clearly into particular problems, and when he employs his staff for probing his terrain. The "mantle" is the presence at a deeper level of consciousness of the whole truth, and it is this which envelops and inspires all intellectual work relating to particular problems that is carried out by the conscious self with its lamp and staff. It is this which gives the conscious self direction and style, and sees to it that each solution to each particular problem is in harmony with the whole. The whole truth lives at this deeper level, and is present there as the certainty of absolute faith, as the certainty of the imprint of truth from above.

The initiate is not someone who knows everything. He is a person who bears the truth within a deeper level of his consciousness, not as an intellectual system, but rather as a level in his being, as a "mantle" which envelops him. This truth-imprint manifests itself as unshakeable certainty, i.e. as faith in the sense of the voice of the presence of the truth.

Truth attained through synthesis is present at a deeper level of consciousness than that of the consciousness of self. It is found in darkness. It is from this darkness that the rays of light of particular branches of knowledge are emitted, as a result of efforts aspiring to the "neutralization of binaries" or the "solution of antinomies". These efforts are nothing other than excursions into the region of this deeper level of consciousness; they are contacts established with the inner darkness, which is full of revelations of truth.

The knowledge and power drawn from this dark and silent region of luminous certainty can be well described as the "gift of Perfect Night", the "ΤΕΛΕΙΟΝ ΜΕΛΑΝ" mentioned in "Kore Kosmu" the Sacred Book of Hermes Trismegistus.

The "gift of Perfect Night" manifests itself in consequence of such spiritual endeavors as are implied by the "neutralization of binaries" or the "solution of antinomies". It is, one can say, the very essence of Hermeticism and constitutes at one and the same time the method which is proper to it and the Faculty of knowledge to the exercise of which its very existence is due.

The Hermit is the spiritual image of he who follows the method and exercises the faculty of the "gift of black perfection" (or the "gift of Perfect Night"). As this method comprises true impartiality, i.e. the search for the synthesis of antinomies and the third term of binaries, the Hermeticist must necessarily be solitary, i.e. a hermit. Solitude is the method itself of Hermeticism. For one has to be profoundly alone in order to be able to exercise the "gift of Perfect Night" in the face of contraries, binaries, antinomies and parts which divide and rend the world of truth. He who seeks synthesis, i.e. true p e a c e, can never take part for or against opposing things. And since it is precisely "taking sides" which groups people into communities and divides them into sections, he is necessarily alone. He can neither embrace any human cause without reserve, nor be opposed to any human cause, being loyal to the cause of t r u t h, which is synthesis and peace. This is why he is condemned, whether he wants it or not, to profound solitude. He is a hermit in his inner life, whatever his outer life may be. He will never be given the joy of plunging himself in national, social or political collectivity. He will never have the blissful experience of having shared out the weight of responsibility with the multitude, and he can never fit in at festivals — or orgies — in the sense implied in the words, "we French", "we Germans", "we Jews", "we Republicans", "we Royalists", or "we communists". The intoxication of plunging into collectivity is not given to him. He must be s o b e r, i.e. alone. Because the pursuit of truth through synthesis — which is peace — implies prudence, and prudence is solitude.

This is why the Gospel puts the peacemakers in the same list as those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and those who are persecuted for Righteousness' sake, assigning them another blessing than that of which they are deprived.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew v, 9) is what is said in the Sermon on the Mount for those who refuse to take sides in the face of partial truths and prejudices, being dedicated to the cause of the whole Truth which unites the world and bears p e a c e to it.

The itinerant "Hermit" — with his mantle, his lamp and his staff — is a "travelling salesman" of peace. He makes his way from opinion to opinion, from belief to belief, from experience to experience — and traces his route so that he traverses the way of peace between opinions, beliefs and experiences, being always equipped with his mantle, lamp and staff. He does so alone, because he walks (and no one can walk for him) and because his work is peace (which is prudence, and therefore solitude).

However, there is no need to take pity on him. For he has his joys, and these are intense. When, for example, he meets another itinerant hermit on the way, what joy and what happiness there is in this meeting of two solitary travellers! This joy has nothing in common with that of the intoxication of feeling free from the burden of responsibility

which plunging into collectivity brings about. On the contrary, it is the joy of responsibility encountering the same responsibility, which together share and alleviate the responsibility of A T h i r d — one who said of his earthly life:-

> "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew viii, 20)

For it is the Master whom all itinerant hermits follow and serve. It is then the joy of two who meet one another in His Name, and where He is "present".

Then there are the joys of profound silence, full of revelations, and those of the starry heaven, whose solemn presence speaks in the language of eternity, and the joys of the constellations of stars, and those of thoughts, and those of breathing air full of spirituality! - No, one need not take pity on the Hermit. Although, like his Master, he has nowhere to lay his head, he is already blessed with the good fortune that the Master promised to those who are peacemakers. He has the good fortune to participate in the work of the Son of God, in taking part in the solitude of the earthly life of the Son of Man.

Those who are peacemakers — hermits — do not in any way procure "peace at any price" and without distinction in kind. For one can achieve peace in various ways, and it is still necessary to distinguish between peace and Peace.

Ostwald's "colored body" can again help us in the solution of this problem. The "white point", the "equator of living colors" and the "black point" of this body can serve as a basis, by analogy, for the problem of the different types of peace and the different ways of realizing it.

Peace is unity in diversity. There is no peace where there is no diversity, and there is no peace where there is only diversity.

Now, unity where diversity disappears is not peace. For this reason, although the "white point" of the colored body, where all colors are drowned in light, is certainly that which renders peace possible, it is not peace as such, taken by itself. Similarly, the "black point" of the body, where all colors disappear into darkness, is not the point of peace, but rather the point of death of diversity and the conflicts that diversity can produce. It is therefore the "equator of living colors" which is the region proper to peace. The living colors of the r a i n b o w that appear in the sky are the visible manifestation of the idea of peace, because the rainbow causes us to see unity in the diversity of colors. There the whole family of colors presents itself to us as seven sisters who join their hands.

For this reason the rainbow is the sign of peace (or alliance) between Heaven and earth, as in Moses' Genesis:-

> "And God said: This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations — I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth." (Genesis ix, 12-13)

Now, four types of peace, understood as the elimination of conflict or opposition, are possible: transcendental peace ("nirvanaic"), immanent peace ("catholic"), the peace of predominance ("hegemonic") and the peace of death ("nihilistic").

Transcendental or "nirvanaic" peace corresponds to the "white point" of the colored body. Immanent or "catholic" peace is the simultaneous living manifestation of <u>all</u> colors of the rainbow and corresponds to the "equator" of the "colored body". The peace of predominance, or "hegemonic" peace, corresponds to the result of the tendency of a particular color to eclipse other colors in the region of the "equator of colors", and to engulf them so that there remains only a single color.

The peace of death, or "nihilistic" peace, corresponds to the "black point" of the "colored body", and signifies an absolute levelling-out of all diversity.

Of these four kinds of "peace", it is only the peace that we have designated "immanent" or "catholic" (universal) which is real and true peace. It is the peace of <u>brotherhood</u> and mutual <u>complement</u>.

As it is this peace that "the Hermit" has for an ideal, he is not presented on the Card in the "padmasana" posture of Buddhist or yogic meditation aiming at the transcendent peace of Nirvana, nor is he presented <u>seated</u> on the throne of power making a commanding gesture, nor lying asleep or dead on the ground, but rather he is presented as <u>walking</u>. He walks, i.e. he goes round the "equator" of living colors of the "colored body" and his way is that of peace in the sense of unity in diversity.

It follow from the foregoing that the Hermit, i.e. the serious Hermeticist, is in no way a "neutralist" — although he applies himself to the "neutralization" of binaries or polarities, to the solution of antinomies or opposites, and to the peace of the rainbow or unity in diversity. He knows how to say "no" to the tendencies aiming at false peace — those of transcendental indifference, subjugation and nihilism — just as he knows how to say "yes" to everything which aims at the true peace of unity in diversity.

He knows how to say "yes" and "no" — these two magical words of the will, by means of which the will is strong, and without which it goes to sleep. "Yes and no" — this is the very life of the will, its supreme and unique law. The will does not know of a third term between, beyond, above or below "yes and no". "A m e n" and "a n a t h e m a" are not only the solemn formulas of liturgy summarizing ultimate affirmation and negation, but also those of the will which lives and keeps awake. For it is only through the "yes" and the "no" that the will lives and keeps awake. The will as such is never impartial, neutral or indifferent.

Now we have arrived at a further antinomy — a <u>practical</u> antinomy: "wisdom-will", or "universal synthesis - particular action" or, also, "knowledge — will".

One <u>must</u> know, i.e. see unity in diversity, and one <u>must</u> will, i.e. cut through contemplated unity, with a sharp sword that cuts both ways — the "yes" and the "no" of the will. To become contemplative is to turn to inactivity. To become active is, in the last analysis, to turn to ignorance.

One can certainly choose to live a contemplative kind of life, but at what price? The following analogy illustrates the price of choosing contemplation as the principal way and central preoccupation of life:

A boat carries passengers and a crew consisting of a captain, officers and sailors. It is the same with the boat as with human society, which voyages from century to century. The latter also bears crew and passengers. The members of the crew are vigilant so that the boat follows its route and the passengers are healthy and safe. Now, to take the part of living a contemplative life implies the decision to become a passenger on the boat of human society and to leave the responsibility for the boat's route, and for the well-being of the other passengers as well as oneself, to the crew — the captain, and the officers and sailors. One therefore becomes a passenger on the boat of human history, when one chooses a life of the contemplative kind. This is the moral price of this choice.

Nevertheless, one must guard against the direct — but superficial conclusion that all "hermits" and "contemplatives" in the various religious orders are passengers. Nothing could be further from the truth. Because amongst these "contemplatives" are often found not only sailors and officers of the crew but also even captains. It is because their work and aim is essentially

practical, although spiritual, that this is so. Prayer, divine service, study and a disciplined and austere life constitute a very active and effective endeavor, having in view the route and destiny of the boat of mankind's spiritual history. Truth to tell, it is the "contemplatives" who bear consciously and voluntarily the bulk of the responsibility for the spiritual route of the boat and for the spiritual well-being both of its crew and its passengers. "Contemplative", for these orders, signifies spiritual endeavor and spiritual responsibility, whilst "contemplative" in the sense of choosing the pole of contemplation at the expense of the pole of will within the human being means that one prefers the enjoyment of contemplation to the effort of will and action (spiritual or outward) that the latter entails. In fact, one can meet a fair number of people who enjoy the contemplative life. They are almost never from religious orders or orders of so-called contemplatives, but above all are lay-amateurs who are so on their own authority. One can meet them amongst dilettante yoga-practitioners, would-be Cabbalists, make-believe Sufis, and metaphysicians in general.

One can, on the other hand, decide for the pole of the will within the human being and want to occupy oneself only with what relates to action and practical aim. One can certainly choose a life of action of some kind, but at what price?

The price is inevitably narrow-mindedness. "What is the good of occupying myself with Eskimos, with whom I have nothing to do, when I do not even know sufficient people in my street and colleagues in my office?" - says one who has chosen action at the expense of knowledge. If he is a believer, he will ask: What is the good of all these vain spiritual occupations — philosophies, sciences, and social and political doctrines — if the sound precepts of the Gospels (or the Bible, the Koran, the Dhammapada, etc.) are sufficient for my salvation and that of humanity?!

Action demands concentration and this inevitably entails the limitation of the spirit to cross-sections of life and the loss of perspective of its totality.

Now, the Prudence taught by the Arcanum "The Hermit" can also give the solution to the practical antinomy "knowledge - will".

The Hermit is neither deep in meditation or study nor is he engaged in work or action. He is walking. This means to say that he manifests a third state beyond that of contemplation and action. He represents — in relation to the binary "k n o w l e d g e - w i l l" or "contemplation - action" or, lastly, "head-limbs" — the term of synthesis, namely that of h e a r t. For it is the Heart where contemplation and action are united, where knowledge becomes will and where will becomes knowledge. The Heart does not need to forget all contemplation in order to act, and does not need to suppress all action in order to contemplate. It is the heart which is simultaneously active and contemplative, untiringly and unceasingly. It walks. It walks day and night, and we listen day and night to the steps of its incessant walking. This is why, if we want to represent a man who lives the law of the heart, who is centered in the heart and is a visible expression of the heart — the "wise and good father", or "the Hermit" — we present him as walking, - without haste and without laziness.

The Hermit of the ninth Card is a man of heart, a solitary man who is walking. Therefore he is a man who has realized in himself the antinomy "knowledge - will" or "contemplation - action". For the heart is the solution here.

The "heart" that we have in mind here is not that of emotion and the faculty of being

passionate that one generally understands as "heart". It is the middle center of the seven centers of man's psychic and vital constitution. It is the "twelve-petalled lotus" or Anāhata center of Indian esotericism. This center is the most human of all the centers or "lotus flowers". For if the eight-petalled or crown center is that of the revelation of wisdom, the two-petalled is that of intellectual initiative, the sixteen-petalled lotus (the larynx center) is that of the creative word, the ten-petalled lotus is that of science, the six-petalled is that of harmony and health, and the four-petalled is that of creative force -- then the twelve-petalled lotus (the heart center) is that of love. This is why it is the most human of the centers, and it is the ultimate criterion not of what a human being possesses — what he can do and what he knows — but rather of what he is.

For the human being is fundamentally what his heart is. It is there that the humanity of the human being resides and is revealed. The heart is the sun of the microcosm.

For this reason Christian Hermeticism — in common with Christianity in general — is "heliocentric", i.e. it attributes to the heart the central place in all its practices. The great work of spiritual alchemy or "ethical Hermeticism" is the transmutation of the substances ("metals") of the other lotuses into the substance of the heart ("gold"). "Ethical Hermeticism" (a term employed in Russia for spiritual alchemy) aims at the transformation of the whole system of lotuses into a system of seven hearts, i.e. to transform the human being entirely into heart. In practice, this means to say the humanization of the whole human being and the transformation of the system of lotuses into a system functioning by love and for love. Thus the wisdom revealed by the eight-petalled lotus will cease to be abstract and transcendental: it will become full of warmth, as the fire of Pentecost. The intellectual initiative of the two-petalled lotus will become "compassion-filled insight" into the world. The creative word of the sixteen-petalled lotus will become magical: it will have the faculty of illumining, consoling and healing.

The heart itself, or the twelve-petalled lotus, which alone of the centres is not attached to the organism, and which can go out of it and live — by the exteriorization of its "petals", which can be rayed outwards — with and in others, will become a traveller, a visitor and anonymous companion of those who are in prison, those who are in exile, and those who bear heavy loads of responsibility. It will be an itinerant Hermit, traversing ways leading from one end of the earth to the other, and also ways through spheres of the spiritual world — from purgatory to the very feet of the Father. Because no distance is insurmountable for love and no door can prevent it from entering — according to the promise which says: "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew xvi, 18). It is the heart which is the marvellous organ called to serve love in its works. It is the structure of the heart — simultaneously human and divine, a structure of love — which by way of analogy can open our understanding to the significance of the meaning of the following words of the Master: "And lo, I am with you always, to the end of time" (Matthew xxviii, 20).

The science of the ten-petalled lotus will then become conscience, i.e. the servant of God and neighbor.

The six-petalled lotus, the center of health, will become that of holiness, i.e. harmony between spirit, soul and body.

The creative force of the four-petalled lotus will then serve as a source of energy and inexhaustible élan for the long way of the itinerant hermit, who is a man of heart, i.e. a man who

has regained his humanity.

The disciple of Hindu Yoga and Tantra meditates on, or inwardly recites, "s e e d - m a n t r a s" (bija mantra) in order to arouse and advance the development of these centers or c h a k r a s.

He inwardly vibrates the syllable _O_M_ for the center between the eyebrows (the two-petalled lotus), the syllable H A M for the larynx center (the sixteen-petalled lotus), the syllable Y A M for the heart center (the twelve-petalled lotus), the syllable R A M for the umbilical center (the ten-petalled lotus), the syllable V A M for the pelvic center (the six-petalled lotus) and the syllable L A M for the center at the base of the spine (the four-petalled lotus). Concerning the crown center (the eight-petalled lotus), there is no bija mantra for it — this center being not the means but rather the aim of yogic development. It is the center of liberation.

Now, the following "m a n t r a s" or Christian formulas are those which relate to these centers:-

"I am the resurrection and the life" - the eight-petalled lotus;
"I am the light of the world" - the two-petalled lotus;
"I am the good shepherd" - the sixteen-petalled lotus;
"I am the bread of life" - the twelve-petalled lotus;
"I am the door" - the ten-petalled lotus;
"I am the way, the truth and the life" - the six-petalled lotus;
"I am the true vine" - the four-petalled lotus.

Here is the difference in the choice of method. It is a matter, dear Unknown Friend, of choosing between the method of vibrating particular sounds — Om, Ham, Yam, Ram, Vam and Lam — and the method which has in view spiritual communion with the seven rays of the "I a m" or the seven aspects of the perfect S E L F, who is J e s u s C H R I S T. The first method aims at awakening the senses <u>such as they are</u>; the second aims at the <u>Christianization</u> of all the centers, i.e their <u>transformation</u> in conformity with their divine-human prototypes. It is a matter here of the realization of the words of the apostle PAUL: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (II Corinthians v, 17).

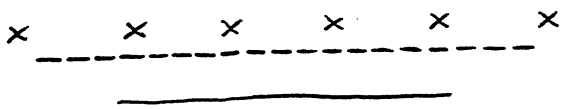
The work of Christianization of the human organization, i.e. the transformation of the human being into a m a n of h e a r t, is accomplished in the <u>inner</u> life of man, the lotus-flowers being only the field where the <u>effects</u> of this purely inner work are manifested. Now, the domain where this transformation is immediately effected consists of three pairs of contraries (practical "antinomies") and three "neutralizations of binaries" — <u>nine</u> factors in all — as follows:

When we speak of the practical antinomy "knowledge-will" and its solution — the "h e a r t" — this is only a general view of the task of integration of the human being. In <u>practice</u> we have to do with "the will of knowledge and the heart of knowledge", "the knowledge of the heart and the will of the heart" and "the knowledge of the will and the heart of the will", for there

is feeling and will in the domain of thought, thought and will in the domain of feeling, and thought and feeling in the domain of will. There are therefore three triangles of "knowledge–heart–will" in practicing the inner work of integrating the human being.

Now, the distinctly practical teaching of the 9th Arcanum is that it is necessary to subordinate the directing intellectual initiative, as well as the flowing spontaneous movement of thought, to the "heart of thought", i.e. to the profound feeling that is found at the basis of the thinking that one sometimes designates "intellectual intuition" and which is the "feeling for truth". It is also necessary to subordinate both spontaneous imagination and actively directed imagination to the direction of the heart, i.e. to the profound feeling of moral warmth that one sometimes designates "moral intuition" and which is the "feeling for beauty". Lastly, it is necessary to subordinate spontaneous impulses and designs directed from the will to the profound feeling which accompanies them that one sometimes designates "practical intuition" and which is the "feeling for the Good".

The Hermit of the 9th Card is the Christian Hermeticist, who represents the "inner work of nine", the work of realizing the supremacy of the Heart in the human being, or in familiar, traditional terms: the "work of salvation" — because the "salvation of the soul" is the restoration of the reign of the h e a r t.



Letter X :- Meditation on the tenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot -- "The wheel of Fortune" - "La roue de Fortune"

"Vanity of vanities! All is vanity...
What has been is what will be,
And what has been done is what will be done;
And there is nothing new under the sun."
(Ecclesiastes i, 2, 9)

"Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est... et ascendit in coelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris."
("For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man... he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father."
(from the Creed)

"And I applied my mind to know wisdom
And to know madness and folly.
I perceived that this also is
but a striving after wind.
For in much wisdom is much vexation,
And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow."
(Ecclesiastes i, 17-18)

"Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted!"
(Matthew v, 4 from the Sermon on the Mount)

Dear Unknown Friend,

We have before us a wheel which rotates, and three figures in animal form of which two (the monkey and the dog) turn with the wheel, whilst the third (the sphinx) is beyond the movement of the wheel: he is seated on a platform above the wheel. The monkey descends in order to rise again; the dog rises in order to descend again. First one and then the other pass before the sphinx.

Simple and natural questions, which arise spontaneously when one looks at the Card, are:

Why do the monkey and the dog turn with the wheel? Why is the sphinx there? How many times will the monkey and the dog pass before the sphinx? And why are there these meetings with the sphinx?

Once having posed these simple questions, we find ourselves already at the heart of Arcanum X, plunged into the very sphere of notions and ideas which it is called to awaken.

In fact, the wheel alone, taken without its two passengers and without the sphinx seated above it, evokes only the idea of a circle or, at most, that of circular movement. The wheel with the two animals, the one rising and the other descending — without the sphinx above

it— evokes the idea of a vain and absurd game. But the wheel turning with its two passengers and the sphinx dominating the whole makes the onlooker ask himself if this is not an arcanum, i.e. a key that one has to know in order to be able to orientate oneself, in this case in the domain of problems and phenomena relating to the circular movement of living beings. It is especially the sphinx above the wheel which gives us an intellectual shock and which impels us to seek out the arcanum of this Card.

Now, there are two categories of ideas concerning the genetic relationship and the general genesis of the four kingdoms of Nature — the mineral realm, the plant realm, the animal realm and the human realm — which have their root in the intellectual life of humanity. The one is based on the idea of the Fall, i.e. degeneration and descent from above below. According to this class of ideas, it is not the monkey who is the ancestor of man, but rather, on the contrary, it is man who is the ancestor of the monkey, which latter is a degenerate and degraded descendant. And the three kingdoms of Nature below the human kingdom are, according to this set of ideas, the projected residue or exteriorization of the comprehensive being of primordial man, or A d a m, who is the original prototype and synthesis of all the entities comprising the four kingdoms of Nature.

The other class of ideas comprises the idea of evolution, i.e. progress transforming from below above. According to this category of ideas, it is the most primitive entity — from the point of view of consciousness as well as biological structure — which is the origin of all beings in the four kingdoms of Nature and which is their common ancestor.

The Card of the tenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot represents a monkey — i.e. an animal with a face still preserving features that one cannot fail to recognize as human — who is falling. For it is not the monkey who is climbing down, but rather it is the movement of the wheel which carries him along. In descending, the monkey raises his head because he is not descending of his own accord. From where does he descend — this animal with a head bearing human features?

He descends from the place where the sphinx is sitting. The crowned and winged sphinx, with a human head and an animal body, and holding a white sword, represents the plane and the stage of being from which the monkey is moving away and towards which the dog is approaching.

Now, if you had had the idea of portraying the idea of the Fall in the sense of degeneration from the comprehensive being — the prototype of all Nature — wouldn't you have shown the sphinx crowned above, as the only possible figure representing the unity of the human and the animal kingdom, the latter in turn being the synthesis of the plant and mineral kingdoms? And wouldn't you have portrayed one figure descending in the course of animalization, deprived of the crown, the sword and the wings, but yet still with features bearing witness to its origin, i.e. would you not have chosen the monkey to represent the transition from the prototype state of comprehensive being to the state of reduced and specialized being? Does not the monkey lend itself marvellously to serve as a symbol of the animalization which is effected at the expense of the angelic and human elements of the prototype being?

On the other hand, if you had wanted to give visual expression to the nostalgia of fallen and fragmented beings for the lost state of fullness and integration, would you not choose the dog, the animal most passionately drawn and attached to the human element, as a symbol of the

aspiration of animals towards union with human nature, i.e. the aspiration towards the sphinx, where animal nature is united to human nature?

The Card of the tenth Arcanum therefore teaches, through its actual context, an organism of ideas relating to the problem of the Fall and the Reintegration, according to Hermetic and Biblical tradition. It portrays the whole circle, including ascent as well as descent, whilst the "transformism" of modern science is occupied with only half of the circle, namely the half of ascent or evolution. The fact is that certain eminent scientists (such as Edgar DAQUÉ in Germany and Pierre TEILHARD de CHARDIN in France) advance the postulate of the pre-existence — be it only potentially — of a prototype for all beings, which is the ultimate as well as the effective cause of the whole process of evolution, and this postulate alone renders evolution intelligible. However, it in no way changes the fact that science works on the basis of the fundamental supposition that the minimum is the ancestor of the maximum, the simple is the ancestor of the complicated, and that it is the primitive which produces the more developed organism and consciousness, although for thought (i.e. reason) this is absolutely unintelligible. This basic scientific presupposition renders evolution unintelligible because it disregards half of the circle, namely all that which precedes — be it only "in ordine cognoscendi" — the state of primitivity from which science takes its departure. Because one has to renounce thought and reduce it to lethargy in order to sincerely believe that man evolved from the primitive and unconscious particles of a primordial mist which was once our planet, without this mist bearing within itself the seed of all possibilities for future evolution, which is the process of "eclosion", i.e. the process of transition from a potential state to an actual state. Thus Arnold LUNN, editor of the book "Is Evolution Proved?", writes that he would certainly like to believe in evolution and accept it as proved, if he could surmount 4 difficulties, including the following:-

> "... for the fact (is) that no evolutionist had produced a plausible guess, much less a theory supported by evidence, to suggest how a purely natural process could have evolved, from the mud, sand, mists and seas of the primeval planet, the brain that conceived Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and the reactions to the beauty of music, of art, and of Nature." ("Is Evolution Proved?" A debate between D. Dewar and H. S. Shelton, ed. Arnold Lunn, London, 1947, p. 333)

It is my painful duty to have to add to the above quotation the reply by William S. BECK, author of "Modern Science and the Nature of Life", to the difficulty to which Arnold Lunn draws attention. He says:-

> "It seems that the argument against evolution is pure metaphysical brocade, artfully draped so as to obscure the cogent evidence of science." (William S. Beck, "Modern Science and the Nature of Life", London, 1961, p. 133)

"Metaphysical brocade" or not, it does not matter, the fact of the unintelligibility for human thought of the theory (not the facts!) of evolution advanced by science nevertheless remains a fact. It is and always will be unintelligible in so far as it takes consideration of only half of the whole circle of evolution, and refuses to accept the other half of the circle, that of involution, or the Fall, which would make it intelligible.

Now, the tenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot represents a circle, a wheel comprising both the descent or departure from the comprehensive prototype being and the ascent towards this being.

The doctrine of the circle of involution and evolution is generally a platitude in occult literature, but it is not so when it is a matter of involution understood as the Fall and evolution understood as salvation. There is a world of difference between the orientalistic doctrine concerning the semi-automatic "process" of involution and evolution, and the Hermetic, Biblical and Christian doctrine concerning the Fall and salvation. The former sees in the circle of involution-evolution only a purely natural process, similar to the process of respiration in a living organism — animal or human. The Hermetic, Biblical and Christian tradition, in contrast, sees here a cosmic tragedy and drama full of the supreme dangers and risks that the traditional terms "perdition-salvation" imply.

Fall, perdition, redemption, salvation are words which, truth to tell, are devoid of meaning, both for a spiritually-orientated evolutionist and for an evolutionist who is scientifically orientated. The former sees in cosmic evolution the eternal circular movement of exteriorization and interiorization — the exhalation and inhalation of divine cosmic respiration. What Fall, then? What risk, what perdition!? What redemption, and of what!? What salvation!? The whole inventory of fundamental Judaeo-Christian ideas is inapplicable in a naturally (i.e. inevitably) evolving world.

Who is right? Those for whom evolution is an organically determined process in which descent and ascent are only two successive phases of a single cosmic vibration? Or those who see in evolution a cosmic tragedy and drama whose essence and "leitmotiv" correspond to the parable of the prodigal son?

What is it to be right? Are the passengers on a boat who have tickets for the voyage mistaken in considering the boat and its crew together as their means of navigation — transporting them following a determined route to the place of destination? For the travellers, the sea voyage is a "natural process", something that happens by itself, provided that the ticket for the passage is paid.

But can the captain, officers and other members of the crew consider the passage over the sea in the same way as the passengers? Evidently not. For those who are responsible for the voyage, the passage signifies work, watches, maneuvering and orientation in order to follow the route and bear the load of responsibility for everything. For the crew, therefore, the voyage is in no way a kind of "natural process", something which happens quite by itself. On the contrary, for them it is effort, struggle and risk.

It is the same with evolution. One sees it as a "natural process" when one looks at it through the eyes of the passengers, and one sees it as a "tragedy and drama" when one looks at it through the eyes of members of the crew. All determinism and fatalism — including naturalism and pantheism — places the responsibility somewhere beyond the moral human being: in Nature, in God, in the stars... This is because all determinism or fatalism is a manifestation of the mentality and psychology of a passenger.

Evolution seen through the eyes of a passenger, i.e. seen as something which works by itself, is nevertheless not an illusion. That is one can indeed find and prove the existence of a "process of evolution" or a "progressive process" which, on a phenomenological level, takes place by itself. But what effort, what sacrifices, what errors and what transgressions hide behind the phenomenological facade of the "process of evolution" and "universal progress" — established and yet to be established!

Here we have arrived at the heart of the "exotericism – esotericism" problem. Exotericism lives in "processes", esotericism in tragedies and dramas. The ancient mysteries were tragedies and dramas — it is here where their esoteric character lies.

Exotericism corresponds to the mentality and psychology of a passenger, esotericism to that of a member of the crew.

But I repeat: exotericism is not purely and simply an illusion. For if ten righteous men had been found in Sodom and Gomorrah, God would have spared these cities. And their inhabitants would have continued the "process of evolution" of their civilization and its customs... It is true that they would not have surmised Abraham's prayer nor the role that the ten righteous men would have played in the possibility for them to continue the "process of their evolution", but they would have continued this process in fact.

It is similar for the whole of evolution. For there is natural selection and there is spiritual selection — or election. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah had sinned against Nature and had been rejected by natural selection, but they would have been to able to survive if ten righteous men had been found amongst them. Then spiritual selection would have spared them, owing to the ten righteous men. The fact of having evolved and of having given shelter to ten righteous men among them would have been sufficient to justify the continuance of their existence, although their customs were contrary to Nature. "Spiritual selection" would have prevailed, therefore, over "natural selection" or, in other words, esotericism would have determined and saved the exoteric life.

Esotericism is therefore not a life and activity which seeks secrecy. It is based on the mentality and psychology of the crew, and its "secrets" are secrets only in so far as the mentality and psychology of the passengers is such as to refuse to participate in responsibility. At the same time there is no more serious error than that of wanting to "organize" a community or fraternity which would be called to play either the role of an instrument of spiritual selection or election, or even the role of a spiritual élite. For one can neither assume the function of election nor consider oneself as elect. It would be morally monstrous if a group of people were to say:- "We shall choose ten righteous men of our time", or "we are the righteous of our time". Because one does not elect; one is elected. Knowledge of the fact of "spiritual selection", or election, and of the role that it plays in the history of mankind and in evolution in general can therefore certainly give rise to the birth of a false esotericism, i.e. to the formation of groups, communities or fraternities which believe themselves authorized to elect, or believe themselves to be elect. "False prophets" and "false elects (Christs)" — of which the Gospel speaks — are, and will be, produced by false esotericism cultivated by those who assume the right of election or "spiritual selection".

It may be added that no Christian saint has ever considered himself otherwise than as a great sinner, and that there was no righteous man or prophet of the Old Testament who was not called or chosen from above.

But let us return to the subject of evolution.

Evolution, as understood exoterically, is a cosmic process — biological or spiritual, this is not important — whilst esoterically understood it is a drama or "mystery" in the sense of the ancient mysteries. And it is only for evolution thus understood that the ideas of the Fall, perdition, redemption and salvation become not only applicable but also necessary.

First let us take the ideas "perdition - salvation" and try to understand them on the level of cosmic evolution — or cosmic drama.

Do not be shocked, dear Unknown Friend, and do forgive me, for I am going to relate a myth — a cosmic myth from the Gnosis — not ancient or modern, but from the eternal Gnosis;

because the cosmic drama is in reality a myth made flesh, and it must first be seen as such before one draws principal intellectual lessons from it. Therefore I am going to relate the myth in order to draw from it some ideas, which are related to the Arcanum of the Tarot with which we are occupied.

"When the Father had accomplished his work on the seventh day of creation, that he had made through his Word, he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had made. And the Father blessed the seventh day, and he sanctified it, because on this day he rested from all his work that he had created.

Thus the seventh day is blessed and sanctified, because it is the day not of the world and the movement of the world, but rather of the Father himself alone. It is the seventh part of the circle of movement of the world, when he withdraws and becomes immobile and silent.

Thus it was that the circle of movement of the world was not closed, but remained o p e n. And the seventh was sanctified and blessed as the open part of the circle of movement of the world, in such a way that the beings of the world had access to the Father and the Father had access to them.

. . . But the Serpent said: "There is no freedom for the world, in so far as the circle of the world is not closed. Because freedom is to be in oneself, without interference from outside, especially from above, on the part of the Father. The world will always follow the will of the Father, and not its own, in so far as there is an opening in the circle of the world, in so far as the S a b b a t h exists."

And the Serpent took his tail in his mouth and thus formed a closed circle. He turned himself with great force and thus created in the world the great swirl which caught hold of Adam and Eve. And the other beings, upon whom Adam had impressed the names that he gave them, followed them.

And the Serpent said to the beings of the world moving on this side of the closed circle, that he formed by taking his tail in his mouth and setting himself in rotation:

"Here is your way: you will commence by my tail and you will arrive at my head. Then you will have traversed the length of the circle of my being and you will have within you the entire closed circle, and thus you will be f r e e as I am free."

But the Woman guarded the memory of the world opened towards the Father and the Holy Sabbath. And she offered herself for the rending of the closed circle in herself in order to give birth to children issuing from the world beyond it, from the world where there is the Sabbath. Thus originated the suffering of her pregnancy, and thus originated sorrow on this side of the world of the Serpent.

And hostility came between the Woman and the Serpent, between the generations of Woman, giving birth with pain, and the generations of the Serpent, giving birth with pleasure. The former will crush the head of the Serpent and the Serpent will wound the heel of the Woman. For the Woman moves in a contrary sense to the movement of the Serpent, and her head reaches to the tail of the Serpent, and her heels touch the head of the Serpent. This is because in the world (which is the current of the Serpent) suffering is its counter-movement. It was through the counter-movement of suffering that there originated the counter-current (of the Sons of the Woman) which is the Thought born from suffering and from memory of the world of the Sabbath.

Thus the Sons of the Woman set up altars to the Father, this side of the world of the

Serpent. And Enosh, son of Seth, not only worshipped the Father, but even came to know his Name. He began to invoke the Name of the Father. But Enoch, a descendant of Seth, went still further: he "walked with God" (Genesis v, 22). He did not pass through the bitterness of death which, for living beings on this side of the circle of the Serpent, is the way out of the closed circle of the Serpent, for he was "taken up" by the Father (Genesis v, 24). For about that time Thought aspiring to the Father succeeded in piercing the circle of the Serpent and in accomplishing an opening in the closed circle.

Thus Initiation and Prophecy could be established on this side of the world of the Serpent. Initiation kept living the memory of the world of the Sabbath, and Prophecy nourished the Hope of deliverance from the circle of the Serpent and the future re-establishment of the world of the Sabbath.

Buddhas taught the way of going out from the world of the Serpent and of arriving at the repose of the Sabbath.

But the Prophets proclaimed the transformation of the world of the Serpent from within it by the coming of the Word which will live in the world of the Serpent and will re-establish within the world of the Serpent not only the Sabbath but also the other six days of Creation such as they were before a third of the beings from each of them were uprooted and swept down by the closed whirlwind of the Serpent (cf. Revelation xii, 4).

This came to be. The Woman-Virgin who is the soul of the counter-movement to the Serpent, and of suffering since the beginning of the world of the Serpent, received, conceived and gave birth to the Word of the Father. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst men in the world of the Serpent, full of grace and truth" (cf. John i, 14).

This is the cosmic myth, the esoteric drama which underlies the exoteric "process of evolution". It sets forth, in the first place, the idea of the <u>open circle</u> and the <u>closed circle</u>. The open circle — or the spiral — is the world before the Fall of the six days of creation crowned by the seventh day, the cosmic Sabbath, which corresponds to what one designates in mathematics as the "step of the spiral". It suggests the idea of unlimited growth and advancement, being through its form only the introduction or antechamber to eternity. It promises unlimited progress.

The closed circle, in contrast, is in principle only a <u>prison</u>, whatever its extent may be. It is a wheel which turns on itself and therefore suggests no advancement beyond its circle. The idea that the closed circle — or wheel — suggests, is that of <u>eternal repetition</u>.

Three historical personalities have vividly portrayed the idea of the cosmic wheel, although each of them did so in a different way. These are: Gautama Buddha, Solomon and Friedrich Nietzsche. The first told of the "wheel of incarnations", where birth, sickness, old age and death repeat themselves endlessly. The illumination that the Buddha had under the Bodhi-tree revealed three truths to him: that the world is a wheel of births and deaths, that its movement is fundamentally nothing other than suffering, and that there is a way towards the center of the wheel, which is at rest.

King Solomon had experience of the wheel — not as that of incarnations, as with

Buddha — but rather as inexorable fate, rendering all human hope and endeavor in vain.

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity".

What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains for ever. The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises anew. The wind blows to the south, and goes round to the north; round and round goes the wind, and repeats the same circuits. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is never full; the streams continue to flow, to the place where they flow again... What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun... (Ecclesiastes i, 2-7, 9)

"I have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after the wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be numbered... I have applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.." (Ecclesiastes i, 14-15, 17-18)

This is the wheel of existence under the sun of which SOLOMON, the wise and sorrowful king of Jerusalem, had a vision.

And what practical advice does he give to posterity? That of supreme despair, as follows:--

"There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil...

Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement. Remove vexation from your mind, and put away pain from your body; for youth and the dawn of life are vanity..."
(Ecclesiastes ii, 24; xi, 9-10)

It is SOLOMON's despair which made him into an Old Testament prophet and gave his work a place between the Psalms and the Books of the Prophets. For Solomon portrays the emptiness — which he calls "vanity" — of the world of the Serpent and thus sets in relief the dilemma: either suicide, or salvation on the part of God, for above the turning wheel there is GOD.

Solomon's despair certainly belongs to the Holy Scripture. He portrays the world without Christ — which, moreover, the Buddha did also. Solomon's sadness is the sighing of creation for deliverance, having become conscious in him.

Thus Buddha rightly diagnosed the world of the Serpent before Christ; Solomon wept over it; but Nietzsche — how monstrous! — sang of it. Yes, Nietzsche saw and understood the wheel, the closed circle with no outlet, of the world of the Serpent, and he said "Yes" to it. He had the vision of eternal repetition, the "eternal return" ("ewige Wiederkunft") — and he identified it with eternity, although it is the very opposite of eternity:

"O wie könnte ich ob der Ewigkeit nicht brünstig sein,
Und ob dem hoch-zeitlichen Ring der Ringe — dem Ring der Wiederkehr!
Nie noch fand ich das Weib, von dem ich Kinder möchte —
Es sei denn dieses Weib die Ewigkeit —
Denn ich liebe dich, o Ewigkeit"--

("—Oh! how should I not burn for Eternity, and for the marriage ring of rings — the Ring of Recurrence? Never yet found I the woman by whom I would have children, save it be by this Woman that I love: for I love thee, O Eternity! For I love thee, O Eternity!")

(Friedrich Nietzsche, "Thus Spake Zarathustra", trsl. A. Tille, rev. M.M. Bozman, Everyman Library, 1958, p.204)

– so he sings of the wheel that Buddha diagnosed as the great misfortune and that Solomon estimated as the vanity of vanities.

Poetical lyricism? It is more than this! Nietzsche certainly gave a poetic form to what he took to be his illumination. But this was only a summary of the last consequences drawn from modern science – not as method, but rather as mode of world-outlook.

In fact, according to the positivistic science of the end of the nineteenth century, the world is the sum-total of innumerable combinations of simple particles, atoms. The combinations change endlessly, but at some time the number of possible combinations of atoms must necessarily reach its limit and the number of new combinations must exhaust themselves. Then the previous combinations must repeat themselves. Therefore there will be sometime in the future a day which will be the exact repetition of today. -- This is the scientific basis of the "eternal return".

Belief in the eternal return has a basis not only in the calculation of possible atomic combinations but also in the scientific dogma of the quantitative constancy of matter and energy in the world. Nothing disappears, nothing appears in the world. The sum-total of matter and energy in the world is constant. It is impossible for it to be either augmented or diminished. One can add nothing to it, nor take anything from it. The w o r l d is a c l o s e d c i r c l e from which nothing escapes and into which nothing enters.

Now, given that the world is a determined quantity, it is calculable. In the last analysis, it is only a determined number of particles and/or units of energy. Therefore the number of combinations of these particles is no longer unlimited. The limit must be reached sometime. And then past combinations will be repeated... The "eternal return" of everything is therefore an inevitable conclusion in a world understood as a closed circle.

In a world which is a closed circle, whose matter and energy are a constant quantity, there are no miracles. Because the cosmic notion of a "miracle" entails inconstancy of the quantity of matter and energy in the world. A miracle takes place when the energy of the world undergoes either an increase or a diminution. This presupposes an <u>opening</u> in the circle of the world. For a miracle to be possible, the world must be an open circle, the world must be a spiral, i.e. it must have an "uncreated" sphere or a "Sabbath", according to the cosmic myth narrated above.

Now, Religion – all advanced religion – teaches that the world is an open circle. For this reason it insists upon the reality of miracles. Miracles ("the supernatural") are a reality of action from beyond the circle of Nature, which appears to be closed. This is the reality of the cosmic Sabbath.

The "good news" of Religion is that the world is not a closed circle, that it is not an eternal prison, that it has an exit and an entrance. There is an entrance, which is why Christmas is a joyous festival. There is an exit, which is why Ascension is a festival. And that the world can be transformed, such as it is, into such as it was before the Fall — this is the "good news" of the festival of festivals, the festival of the Resurrection or Easter.

The world as a closed circle, the world of the eternal return, the world where "there is nothing new under the sun" — what is this in reality?

It is nothing other than <u>cosmic hell</u>. For the idea of hell can be understood as eternal

existence in a closed circle. The closed circle of egoism would then be subjective and individual hell; the closed circle of a world of constant energy would then be objective and cosmic hell.

Now we have the cosmic meaning of the terms "salvation" and "perdition". "Perdition" is to be caught up in the eternal circulation of the world of the closed circle, the world without a Sabbath; "salvation" is life in the world of the open circle, or spiral, where there is both exit and entrance. "Perdition" is existence in the closed circle of the "eternal return"; "salvation" is life under the open sky, where each day is new and unique — a miracle in the infinite chain of miracles... For God is not unknowable, but rather, knowable — through inexhaustible and infinite knowledge. The infinite "revelationability" and "knowability" of God: this is the essence of the eternal Sabbath, the seventh day of creation. The seventh day of creation is that of eternal life and the source of miracles. For it is laden with possibilities of new things, and from it "energies" can be added to the so-called "constant" quantity of the phenomenal world, just as energies of this world can disappear into it.

The two other terms in the cosmic drama of evolution are "the Fall" and "redemption". It is now easier to understand them after having drawn out to a certain extent the cosmic meaning of the terms "salvation" and "perdition". For "the Fall" is a cosmic event, a whirlwind set in motion by the closed circle of the Serpent "biting" his tail and "sweeping down part of the created world" (cf. Revelation xii,4). And "redemption", to say it directly, is the cosmic act of the Reintegration of the fallen world, first in creating an <u>opening</u> in its closed circle (religion, initiation, prophecy), then in instituting a <u>path</u> of <u>exit</u> (Buddhas) and <u>entrance</u> (Avatars) through this door, and lastly in transforming the fallen world from within by the radiation of the Incarnated Word (Jesus Christ).

This is the meaning of these two terms on a level of generalization carried to a high degree.

Let us now look at the meaning of these two terms more closely, so that the essential details can stand out from the totality.

Firstly, the F a l l. Here we are confronted with the Biblical account of Paradise and the six days of creation; with the impressive tableau of natural evolution that science advances, with the contours of a majestic outline by the genius of ancient India of K a l p a s, m a n v a n t a r a s and y u g a s — a world of periodicity and rhythm, a world dreamt periodically by cosmic consciousness; with the exposition (following the "Stanzas of Dzyan") of cosmogony and anthropogony according to the Indo-Tibetan tradition, given by H. P. BLAVATSKY in the three volumes of her "Secret Doctrine"; with the grandiose tableau of the spiritual evolution of the world through seven so-called "planetary" phases that Rudolf STEINER has bequeathed to the dumbfounded intellectuality of our century; lastly, with the cosmogonies and eschatologies — explicit or implicit — of Hermes TRISMEGISTUS, PLATO, the Z o h a r and diverse G n o s t i c schools of the first centuries of our era....

May I be permitted to say straight away that, although I have had actual experience of comparing the whole range of these ideas and documents for more than forty years, I cannot make use of them here in the sense of the treatment which they merit, i.e. to classify them, to extract the essential points of similarity or contrast, to make relevant

quotations, etc. If I were to do so, I would drown the essential theme in a sea of secondary elements (secondary with regard to the main theme). Therefore I have to proceed in the following way:- the s p i r i t of all the various ideas and documents enumerated above will be present as a general background, but it will be necessary to refrain from any explicit use of the material which they comprise. Having said this, let us return to the problem of the cosmic Fall.

Firstly, one can ask: What is this problem? How does it arise?

Let us look at the totality of our experience of the world — personal, historical, biological, etc. What does it say to us?

LEIBNITZ, the philosopher of optimism, said that the given world is the most perfect of possible worlds. SCHOPENHAUER, the philosopher of pessimism, said that in the given world the sum of suffering outweighs that of joy, and that the world of our experience is therefore not only imperfect but also, in the last analysis, evil. Both Leibnitz and Schopenhaver looked at the totality of the experience of the world, as we are now seeking to, and what a difference in what they saw!

From the point of view of pure thought, which is that of Leibnitz, the totality of the world shows up without any doubt a perfect arrangement of equilibrium, a harmonious functioning of its essential parts and — despite what may take place in its more obscure nooks and crannies — the totality of the world taken in its great outlines, in its essential outlines, is harmony itself.

From the point of view of pure will, which is that of Schopenhaver, the experience of each individual being in the world confirms the diagnosis of the world given by Gautama Buddha, which diagnosis is therefore to be accepted as true.

And from the point of view of the h e a r t, which is that of Hermeticism and the Judaeo-Christian tradition, what can one say about the world?

The heart says to us: the cosmos, this marvel of wisdom, beauty and goodness, s u f f e r s. It is ailing. This great organism which cannot have been born out of sickness, whose birth must have been due to perfect health, i.e. to perfect wisdom, perfect beauty and perfect goodness, the totality of which was its cradle — this great organism is ailing. The continents — and the planets — grow ever-more hard, petrifying: this is the "sclerosis" of the cosmos. And on the surface of its land-masses in the process of petrification, and in the deeps of the sea, and in the air, there reigns the struggle for existence — this is the fever of inflammation in the world.

But sick as it is, the world still retains — everywhere and always — characteristics of its primordial health, and shows the working of forces of its new health, its convalescence. Because alongside the struggle for existence there is cooperation in order to live, and alongside the mineral petrification, there is the succulent and breathing cover of the plant kingdom. The world can therefore be lauded and wept for at the same time.

This is the origin of the problem of the Fall: that the world is worthy of being sung for and wept for at the same time.

The world is not what it should be. There is a contradiction between the totality and the details. For whilst the starry heavens represent a harmony of equilibrium and perfect cooperation, animals and insects devour one another and innumerable legions of infectious microbes bear sickness and death to men, animals and plants.

It is this contradiction which the term "the Fall" alludes to. In the first place, it designates a state of affairs in the world which gives the impression that the world is composed of two independent, if not opposed, worlds, as if in the organism of the great world of the "harmony of the spheres" there is interpolated another world with its own laws and evolution — as if a cancerous outgrowth has taken place in the otherwise healthy organism of the great world.

Science takes the two worlds together and considers them as inseparably united and names this totality N a t u r e — Nature with two faces: Nature, benign and cruel, at one and the same time; Nature both stubborn and astonishingly cooperative; wise and blind Nature; Nature, the loving mother and the cruel stepmother, full of malice... With all due respect to science, it is necessary to draw attention to a quite simple error of thought that it commits. Notably, it commits the same error that a doctor would commit if he were to consider a state of sickness (e.g. cancer) as normal or "natural" and if he were to declare that the cancerous process as well as the circulation of the blood were two aspects of the nature of the organism of the sick person. This would be something monstrous, if the doctor refused to distinguish between nature and counter-nature (sickness) in the organism of the patient — yet this is precisely what science does with regard to the world-organism. It refuses to distinguish between Nature and counter-Nature, health and sickness, natural evolution and evolution contrary to Nature.

The ancients always knew that there is an anomaly in the state of the world. Whether they attributed it to the principle of ignorance ("avidya") as in ancient India, or to the principle of darkness (Ahriman) as in ancient Persia, or again to the principle of evil (Satan) as the ancient Semites did, is not important; it is always a matter of distinction between the natural world and the unnatural world, between the natural and the peverse, between health and sickness.

It goes without saying that Hermeticism, in accordance with the Judaeo-Christian tradition, regards the "Nature" of science not as the World created by God, but rather as the Field where the created world meets with the world of the Serpent.

The world of the Serpent: this is the "world within the World" which gave rise to the dualism of Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and certain gnostic schools. These kinds of dualism fall under the title of "heresy", i.e. they sin against the essential truths of salvation, because they commit the same error as modern science, but in an inverse sense. Just as science refuses to distinguish in "Nature" between the Nature of orthogenesis and cooperation on the one hand, and the Nature producing genetic impasses and parasites on the other hand, so did the Manichaeans, Cathars, Albigenses, etc., refuse to distinguish between virginal Nature and fallen Nature. But whilst science considers its "Nature" — although Nature is a contradiction in herself — as the sovereign Queen of evolution, who has managed to lead evolution from the albuminous cell to the developed brain of Homo Sapiens, the radical dualists considered their "Nature" as being evil through and through. In other words, science considers Nature, in the last analysis, good; the Manichaeans regarded Nature as evil. Science refuses to see Satan there; the radical dualists wanted to see nothing but Satan there.

But let us return to the World of the Serpent. The most general characteristic feature of this world is e n f o l d m e n t, whilst the most general characteristic feature of the created world is unfoldment, blossoming and radiation.

Thus the brain and intestines in the animal kingdom are due to enfoldment; foliage, branches and flowers are expressions of the contrary tendency in the plant kingdom. Thus, for example, foliage is the "lung" of the plant, unfolded and open to the air whilst the animal or human lung is enfolded foliage. Or another example: the sun is in a state of radiation, whilst

the planets are in a state of condensation, i.e. enfoldment.

These two tendencies have their traditional designations. They are "light" and "darkness", i.e. radiation and enfoldment, respectively. This is why the Gospel according to John, in describing the cosmic drama, says:- "Light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness apprehendeth it not" (John i, 5). (kai to phos en te skotia phainei, kai he skotia auto ou katelaben -- et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt). Ou katelaben... non comprehenderunt — this expresses that the light was not caught up in the whirlwind of enfoldment and is not obscured by it, but shines in the darkness. This is the quintessence of the Gospel, the Good News.

Thus the Sun and the stars are to the planets (including the Earth) as light is to darkness. And in the microcosm, the system of "lotus-flowers" is to the system of endocrine glands as light is to darkness. For the "lotus flowers" are, fundamentally, blossoming glands, whilst the glands are enfolded "lotus flowers". The endocrinal glands are precipitates of the "lotus flowers" in the microcosm, just as the planets are precipitates of the "planetary spheres" in the macrocosm or planetary system.

Now, the world of the Serpent is that of enfoldment. The Serpent biting his tail and thus forming a closed circle is its symbol. Completely successful enfoldment would be hell or the state of complete isolation.

But complete enfoldment or accomplished isolation has in no way succeeded in the world. The history of so-called "natural" evolution traces for us a tableau of successive attempts — none of which have been successful — aiming at establishing through complete enfoldment a viable organism with an absolutely autonomous consciousness, without falling prey to madness. Is not the atom an entity produced by enfoldment, which is autonomous and independent? But atoms associate themselves with one another in molecules! Is the molecule, therefore, not an autonomous entity? Well, molecules associate themselves into mysterious fraternities of life that we name "organic cells". Then there are the innumerable associations of molecules in the organism... the history of the evolution of living organisms is that of the triumph of the principle of association and cooperation over that of dissociation and isolation. The latter has succeeded in forming only non-viable monsters, e.g. the dinosaurs and giant reptiles which overran the earth and which had their uncontested reign for a hundred million years of the mesozoic or reptile era. Where are they now? They were only a great biological impasse, therefore they perished. Their reign gave way to that of mammals and birds. The former also produced many forms of impasse before an upsurge of vertebrates came, during the advance of which form after form was rejected, condemned either to a rapid or a slow extinction, until the primates, from which one subdivision — that of Homo Sapiens — took possession of the earth, and now rules without rival. Thus our planet, which was in the mesozoic era the "planet of reptiles", has now become the "planet of human beings".

Is the human being the granddaughter of the Reptile? Or, in Biblical terms, are human beings the "children of the Serpent", the "children of Darkness", the product of enfoldment — or are they "children of the Light" (Luke xvi,8)?

Man has the most developed brain. Now the brain is — as Henri BERGSON has shown — an organ which plays the role of a sieve with respect to consciousness: it is an instrument of knowledge and ignorance at one and the same time. Its function is to admit on behalf of consciousness what is appropriate to it and not to admit — "to forget" — what "is not appropriate" to it from the point of view "of action, or the will aspiring to action".

The brain is therefore an organ of selection — the epitome of the process of evolution! For what

the brain does is essentially what took place during millions of years of biological evolution. The whole of evolution is the process of the sequence "creation-selection-rejection-forget", repeated incessantly. The "proper" forms are chosen, the others are rejected. There is an invisible sieve at work. Now, this sieve has become visible; it has become flesh. It is the brain.

Henri BERGSON says concerning the brain:

> "In the work of thought in general, as in the particular case of memory, the brain appears to be charged simply with the task of impressing on the body the movements and attitudes which act what the mind thinks, or what the circumstances invite it to think. I have expressed this by saying that the brain is an "organ of pantomime"... Indeed, the cerebral phenomena are to the mental life just what the gestures of the conductor are to the symphony: they mark out the motor articulations, they do nothing else. In other words, we should find nothing of the higher workings of the mind within the cerebral cortex. Except its sensory functions, the brain has no other part than to mime, in the full meaning of the term, the mental life." (Henri Bergson, "Mind-Energy", trsl. H.W. Carr, London, 1920, pp. 74-75)

The brain is therefore an organ effecting mimicry, choosing what it is going to mime. It mimes accordingly.

Now, relevant mimicry is precisely what the Book of Genesis understands by cunning (a r u m - עָרוּם) when it says that "the Serpent was more cunning than any other creature that the LORD God had made" (Genesis iii, 1). It is, as it were, the "psychological" principle of the Serpent, just as enfoldment and movement in a closed circle is its "dynamic" principle.

To be cunning is to mime wisdom, after having eliminated the essential — its light — and then to make use of it for one's own ends. This is why it is said that "the devil is the ape of God", that he apes God.

The brain is therefore due to the Serpent. It is the work of the Serpent; and mankind, as the animal species endowed with the most developed brain, is certainly a granddaughter of the Serpent. Human beings, as cerebral beings, are indeed "children of the Serpent" or "children of darkness".

This is why there exists a kind of brotherly piety with which the serpent is venerated in various places in the world — Egypt, India (the "sacred Nagas"), Mexico, central America and, lastly, China, where the sacred Reptile is venerated in its flying form, that of the Dragon. Even Moses erected a bronze serpent on a pole in the desert, and it was only in the time of the reign of Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, king of Judah, that the worship of the serpent was put to an end — notably when Hezekiah "broke in pieces the brouze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days (i.e. during all the centuries of Judges and Kings, until Hezekiah!) the people of Israel had burned incense to it; it was called N e h u s h t a n" (II Kings xviii, 4). But many centuries later a gnostic sect, the Naasenes (Nahashenes), worshipped the Serpent in the same region — and this was after Jesus Christ!

Even in the XIXth and XXth centuries, several occultist writers have striven to restore the cult of the Serpent, this time in an intellectual form. Thus H.P. Blavatsky did much in her "Secret Doctrine" to honor the Serpent as the philosophical idea of ancient wisdom. She interpreted it as the principle of universal Energy, F O H A T, which has a unique and indispensable place between the universal Intellect, M A H A T, and universal Matter, P R A K R I T I. She evoked the ancient legends and traditions of the teachers of childlike humanity, who were

the creators of civilization — the "Sons of the Serpent" — the benefactors of mankind at the dawn of its history.

Eliphas LÉVI presented the Serpent as the "great magical agent", i.e. the intermediary principle between consciousness and the world of objective facts. According to him, the Serpent is the principle of realization, i.e. that which in practice translates the will into events, that which objectifies the subjective.

Stanislaus de GUAITA dedicated his unfinished work to the Serpent by giving it the title "Le serpent de la Genèse". In this book he portrays the reality of the role of the "great magical agent" in history.

As to the Theosophical Society, the Serpent biting its tail with a hexagram and Egyptian Tau within the closed circle of the Serpent was chosen as its symbol and seal, accompanied by the motto of the Maharajas of Benares:- "Satiyat Nasti Paro Dharmah"-"There is no religion higher than Truth".

Yes, the Serpent is indeed the "great magical agent", that is to say, the principle which mimes consciousness and which is therefore the link between the subjective and the objective, just as the brain is the link between consciousness and action. Yes, the first representatives of cerebral intellectuality, the "Sons of the Serpent" of ancient legends, were certainly the first masters of new-born civilization. It is certainly they who taught the rudiments of the arts and sciences to childlike humanity.

Having admitted this, I nevertheless ask myself: Is the Serpent, as the "great magical agent", the <u>only</u> magical agent, and is he the magical agent of <u>all</u> magic? Does divine magic or sacred magic (which we have referred to in the Letters relating to the III rd and V th Arcana of the Tarot) make use of the same agency as that of fakirs, hypnotists, magnetic healers and necromancers?

Now, centuries of experience show that there is not only <u>another agent</u> and <u>another magic</u>, but also that there is another consciousness and experience than that due to the brain. It was not the Serpent that John the Baptist saw descend upon the Master of Sacred Magic, the greatest thaumaturgist of history, but rather a D o v e.

> "John bore witness: I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him." (John i, 32) -- several days later the miracle of the wedding at Cana was accomplished.

The seven miracles — the wedding at Cana, the healing of the nobleman's son, the healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on water, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus — did not have the Serpent as their agent, nor was the brain the instrument of their accomplishment, nor was cerebral intellectuality the source of their initiative. The agent here is the Dove, i.e. the Spirit which is above the brain, above the head, and which <u>descends</u> upon the head and remains there — the Spirit which <u>transcends</u> cerebral intellectuality. This Spirit is the source of initiative and, simultaneously, is the agent and instrument of divine or sacred Magic.

Therefore I ask myself — and I ask you, dear Unknown Friend — why occultist-authors have not directed their zeal, fervor and ability to serve the cause of the Dove, instead of that of the Serpent? Why have they not recognized the Great Agent of sacred Magic, which has certainly demonstrated that it is called to illumine, heal and transform the world? Why did the Theosophical Society, which values Truth above all belief, not choose the Dove of the Holy Spirit as its standard? Why was the Dove of the Holy Spirit, which is the very

Principle of universal spirituality, not chosen instead of the Serpent biting its tail? Why did Stanislaus de GUAITA not write a book entitled: "The Dove of the Gospel"? Why did Eliphas LÉVI not refer to the new great magical agent, the Dove, which is called to replace the ancient magical agent, the Serpent? Why did H.P. BLAVATSKY refuse to see that there are two principles of cosmic Energy, that of Fohat or the energy of the Serpent, and that of the Holy Spirit or the energy of Salvation? Even if the Stanzas of D Z Y A N do not make any mention of it, are they to be taken as the only source of truth? And is the testimony of prophets, apostles and saints for over thirty centuries for nothing!?

I am perplexed, I repeat, not because the interpretation of the Serpent according to the above-mentioned authors is not true, in what it essentially concerns, but because the subject of the Serpent is treated by them with a strange exclusiveness, even partiality, that is difficult to explain by objective facts referring to the problem as such, without recourse to psychological factors.

Be that as it may, there is a rather pronounced tendency in occult literature to present the Serpent as the sole principle of realization, and even as the sole principle of knowledge, including occult knowledge.

Now, with respect to ourselves, we are able, in the first place, to see in the Serpent only the principle of cerebration, cerebral intellectuality, and the principle of enfoldment, the tendency to form closed circles — or, in other words, the principle of the Fall. I say: in the first place, because, thanks to the work of Salvation, which has a millennial-old history, a gradual spiritualization of the work of the Serpent — including cerebral intellectuality — has taken place, and because intervention from above not only frustrates the formation of completely closed circles, but also gives to the tendency of enfoldment a direction towards solidarity through stages such as the family, the nation and the community of civilization. In other words, Providence sees to it that the circles formed by the Serpent are not entirely closed, and that the series of its circles are changed into a series of as many spirals.

But the benefits of this gradual metamorphosis of the work of the Serpent are not due to the Serpent, but rather to the other principle — the contrary principle — that of the "light which shines in the darkness". For the reality and entirety of evolution consists on the one hand of the enfolding activity of the Serpent, which has formed the brain and produced cerebral intellectuality, and on the other hand of the activity of the light from above, which opens the enfolded and illumines cerebral intellectuality.

The Serpent and the Dove: these are, in the last analysis, the factors underlying the whole process of evolution.

If you were to ask me, dear Unknown Friend, if one has to choose and take the side of either the Serpent or the Dove, my reply would be in the framework of the Master's counsel:

"Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves" — (Matthew x, 16)

i.e. that one should try to unite cerebral intellectuality with spiritual spontaneity. It is certainly necessary to think in articulated thoughts and in a discursive manner, but above this process of discursive thought there always soars the ideal! It is in the light of the ideal that one should think.

But let us return to the question: Are human beings "children of the Serpent" or "children of the Light"? We have said that human beings, as the animal species endowed with the most developed brain, are children of the Serpent. Now, it is necessary to add that as beings aspiring to the ideal of the Good, the Beautiful and the True, human beings are children of the Light.

Because, whatever may be said in the contrary sense, there is no reason — nor is there anything

given in the whole domain of biological evolution culminating in the formation of the human brain — which explains and makes the human aspiration towards Truth, Beauty and Goodness appear necessary. Every monastery and convent is, moreover, a direct contradiction to the thesis that mankind is only the product of biological evolution. All renunciation of concrete things — such as wealth, power, health and even life — for an ideal, bears witness to the trans-evolutionary and trans-cerebral reality of the nucleus of the human being.

IF the excavations carried out by paleontologists supply skulls and skeletons as evidence of the biological evolution leading to the human brain, the martyrs throughout history bear witness at the same time to the fact of the transcendence of the nucleus of human nature with respect to biological evolution.

This is because complete evolution is the intersection of biological evolution and spiritual evolution. The fact of the intersection of these two quite different domains is the reality of the Fall.

The other term of the cosmic drama with which we are occupied, and which is linked to that of the "Fall", is redemption.

We have said above that redemption is the "cosmic act of the Reintegration of the fallen world, first in creating an opening in its closed circle (religion, initiation, prophecy), then in instituting a path of exit (Buddhas) and entrance (Avatars) through this door, and lastly in transforming the fallen world from within by the radiation of the incarnated Word (Jesus CHRIST)".

Thus, the thesis that we are advancing here is that the work of salvation leading to actual redemption is universal concerning both time and space. For it has acted since the cradle of mankind's history and it extends to all groups and all religions of mankind. The centuries are its stages and the whole of mankind was — and is — its Field. The work of salvation is catholic in the literal, Hermetic, magical, gnostic and mystical sense of the word. This means to say that the history of the suffering, militant and triumphant Church is as long as that of humanity, and that it is as vast as humanity itself. For the Word is the "true light that enlightens every man coming into the world" (John i, 9), i.e. every human being, always and everywhere.

There is therefore only a single work of salvation, which includes all human endeavor truly aiming at transcending the brain and cerebral intellectuality, and which includes all true revelations from above, throughout all the ages of the history of mankind. It operates in stages... From the first altar erected somewhere on a hill or in the corner of a field, to the great cathedrals of Europe aspiring to heights of consciousness above the sphere of cerebral intellectuality; it has been in stages.

The stages of the work of universal salvation constitute the spiritual history of mankind, which is the great universal Bible of which the historical Bible is a part. It can be summarized in two ways according to two different points of view: from the point of view of revelation, and that of operation.

According to the first point of view, mankind's spiritual history could be summarized — as the Cabbala does — by giving the various aspects of God that are revealed successively in the spiritual history of mankind. The ten Names of God of the Cabbala, which correspond to the ten SEPHIROTH of the Sephiroth Tree, represent a summary of mankind's spiritual history from the point of view of the gradual revelation of God. For, from the aspect represented by the Name ADONAI (Lord), to the aspect indicated by the Name EYEH (I am), there is a long road, the former being a term for the superiority of power, pure and simple, whilst the latter name signifies intuition of the Being-who-is-the-essence-of-being, or "He who is".

According to the point of view of the operation of the work of salvation, one could summarize

mankind's spiritual history by describing its stages from the first opening of the closed circle of the Serpent to the advent and blossoming of the "reign of God" within this circle.

The stages in question are, therefore, the opening of the closed circle, the path of exit and entrance through this door, and the Incarnation of the Word. The first stage, that of the opening of the closed circle, makes way for the entrance of FAITH into incarnated mankind; the second brings it HOPE; the third kindles LOVE within it, which is the active presence of divine life at the heart of the circle of the Serpent.

All that mankind had been believing, had been hoping, has become reality in the present — this is the essence of the whole spiritual history of mankind in a single phrase.

But this summary comprises a world of events. It includes: the first awakening of memories of Paradise in souls immersed in the darkness of the struggle for existence; the institution of worship (cult) to guard these memories and to protect them from being forgotten; the arising of priests charged with this cult, and of seers and prophets who keep it alive and develop it; the arising of schools of individual effort aspiring to trans-cerebral experience; the glorious news that such endeavor is not in vain, that there is a path of exit; the teachings of the Buddhas, the masters of this path; the revelations of the Avatars, Rishis, Great Masters and the "Men of God" — demonstrating the reality of the path of entrance, manifestation and incarnation; the spiritual preparation in the whole world, and the real preparation in a chosen people — I s r a e l — of the Incarnation prefigured by the incarnations and manifestations of Avatars and Boddhisattvas (on the path to "Buddhahood"); then the Incarnation itself, and lastly all that is implied in St. PAUL's words in his epistle to Timothy:

> "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by Angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, and taken up in Glory." (I Timothy iii, 16)

Now, what is generally understood by "evolution" is due to the concurrence of two principal lines of operation — that of the Serpent and that of the work of Salvation. Principal, I say, because there are also secondary lines which play an intermediary role between the principal lines — such as, for example, the line of evolution of individual souls by way of repeated incarnations. This subject has been considered in a previous Letter (Letter IV) and will be considered again in the XIII-th Letter. We draw attention here, in the context of general evolution, only to the following fact:-

Science is at present confronted with the problem of the transmission by way of heredity of characteristics acquired through experience. This problem, such as it is presented today, is due to the paradoxical contradiction between what is known about the law of heredity and what is known about evolution and progress in general. Notably, it has been found that acquired characteristics do not transmit themselves by heredity and, on the other hand, the sum-total of facts concerning general evolution provides evidence of progress. In order to resolve the contradiction between heredity, which only reproduces, and general evolution, which demonstrates creativity, it is necessary to have recourse to a further dimension, i.e. to add the vertical dimension to that of horizontal continuity in time — the latter dimension being that of heredity, which connects successive generations. It has to be admitted that acquired characteristics are accumulated somewhere else other than by way of the mechanism peculiar to heredity, and that between "heredity" and

"acquired characteristics" (which latter do not disappear but are simply relegated "somewhere else") there is an active tension which manifests itself in education and self-education, as well as in the arising of intellectual and moral geniuses as fruits of a mediocre line of forefathers. This tension between the mechanism of heredity and characteristics acquired through experience — and accumulated "somewhere else" — leads in the long run to the prevalence of the latter, and a kind of "eruption" of acquired characteristics takes place in the hereditary mechanism. The fruits of past experience, so to say, "reincarnate".

It is thus that one is led to postulate the principle of reincarnation. And when modern depth psychology of the school of Jung adds sufficient material concerning the resurgence of past experiences in dreams, vision, and in the life of Fantasy, of people who — in their normal consciousness — know nothing about it (and thus, for example, the rituals and symbols of the ancient mysteries reappear in the full light of day of the twentieth century), then the postulate necessary to explain the possibility of progress ceases to be solely a postulate, but becomes a conclusion, based on experience and endowed with a high degree of probability.

It is true that JUNG designated the realm where past experiences are buried as the "collective unconscious". But why <u>collective</u>? Why not individual unconscious? Is it simply because experiences of the past, which arise from the depths of consciousness, have much in common?... that they resemble one another?

But it is <u>human beings</u> in whom these experiences of the past arise. It is therefore quite natural that they have much in common — in Fact, as much in common as human beings have in common. For this reason alone, is it necessary to postulate the <u>collectivity</u> of subconscious (or superconscious) memory that spans millenia? Is it not more simple and natural to conclude that the one who remembers an experience is also the one who experienced it?

But to do justice to Jung it should be pointed out that he did not insist on a <u>substantial collectivity</u> to his "collective unconscious". As a true scientist, he leaves open the question whether the collective unconscious is a reservoir common to mankind, or whether it is a totality derived by synthesizing <u>characteristics common to individuals</u>. The "metaphysic", so to say, of the collective unconscious was but little elaborated by Jung. Be that as it may, the <u>facts</u> that Jung assembled and presented lend themselves <u>at least</u> as easily to interpretation in terms of reincarnation as in terms of a collective unconscious.

But for the inner forum of consciousness — and I remind you, dear Unknown Friend, that these Letters are addressed only to your inner forum, and that on principle they do not aim to advance doctrines of general, i.e. scientific, validity — it is the experience within the depths of your own soul which has the last word on the problem of individual reincarnation, and it is to this that the task falls of transforming the possibility and probability of reincarnation into certainty... certainty in the inner forum of consciousness, of course.

There are, therefore, three "continuities" in evolution: biological or hereditary continuity, psychic continuity or reincarnation, and spiritual continuity or the work of salvation. Note that these three lines of continuity correspond to the dynamic triangle to which Fabre d'OLIVET reduced the history of the human race — the triangle: Destiny, Will, Providence. Heredity corresponds to Destiny (Fate), reincarnation to Will (Freedom) and the Work of Salvation to Providence. This is what he says concerning this triangle:

"But if man is, at first... only a power in germ which civilization must develop,

whence will come to him the indispensable principles of this culture? I reply that it will be from the two powers to which he finds himself linked and of which he must form the third... These two powers, between which he finds himself placed, are Destiny and Providence. Beneath him is Destiny, natura naturata (necessitated Nature); above him is Providence, natura naturans (free Nature). He is himself, as kingdom of man, the mediatory will, the effective force, placed between these two Natures to serve them as a link, a means of communication, and to unite two actions, two movements, which would be incompatible without him.

The three powers which I have just named... constitute the universal ternary. Nothing escapes their action; all in the universe is subject to them; all except God himself who, enveloping them in His unfathomable unity, forms with them the sacred tetrad of the ancients, that immense quaternary, which is all in all and outside of which there is nothing." (Fabre d'OLIVET, "L'histoire philosophique du genre humain"; trsl. N.L. Redfield, "Hermeneutic Interpretation of the Origin of the Social State of Man and of the Destiny of the Adamic Race", London-New York, 1915, intr., pp. xl-xli)

I permit myself to add to this quotation from Fabre d'Olivet that during my whole life I have not succeeded in finding a more lucid formula and a more effective general key for understanding the evolution and history of mankind than that given by Fabre d'Olivet. However, the century and a half which has elapsed since his work and the growth of knowledge concerning mankind's history which has been achieved in this lapse of time — and also the unfortunate bias of Fabre d'Olivet, which blinded him with respect to certain mysteries of Christianity — has forced me to revise the application by Fabre d'Olivet of his praiseworthy general principles concerning concrete problems and details of the history of mankind. The same remark is applicable also to Saint-YVES d'ALVEYDRE, above all to his work "Mission of the Jews" ("Mission des Juifs"), excepting the anti-Christian bias, which is not to be found with him.

H e r e d i t y, r e i n c a r n a t i o n and the work of s a l v a t i o n -- reincarnation being the intermediary principle between the other two -- therefore together constitute the cosmic drama of evolution.

Card X of the Tarot, in evoking this whole problem, gives a cross-section through the middle of the problem of evolution by portraying the aspect of most practical significance, i.e. the relationship between "animality" (animal nature) and "humanity" (human nature).

The S p h i n x above the W h e e l represents animality and humanity united — either still not differentiated, or already reintegrated. The enigma of the Sphinx is therefore that of the humanization of animality and the animalization of humanity.

The dog ascending towards the Sphinx represents animality aspiring to union with humanity; the monkey descending represents the process of the animalization of humanity.

It is a matter, therefore, of the Arcanum of the practical solution of the problem: How to accomplish, without eradication or ejection, a wholeness of the human and animal elements in the human personality without the former animalizing (becoming "monkey") or the latter falling under the tyrannical domination (becoming "dogs") of the former? Or, in other words: How to descend into the animal element without becoming animalized and how to make an ascent without the coercion of animality to the human element?

Now, the tenth Arcanum is also strictly practical. It is a spiritual exercise which has the aim of awakening an "arcanum", i.e. skilled knowledge of a certain "know-how". And the "know-how" of which it is a matter with the tenth Arcanum is the right way of handling on the one hand the elements of animalized man, which proceed away from a center, and on the other hand those

elements of animality aspiring to humanity, which strive towards a stable center.

This stable center is the S p h i n x, placed above the wheel of animality, i.e. above the automatic movement in man's psychic nature.

The w h e e l and the Sphinx above it... what practical task does this context suggest? -- The following:

There is c r e a t e d animality and there is "evolved" animality. The former had its origin before the Fall and the latter owes its existence to evolution since the Fall, i.e. to the work of the Serpent. There is the animality created by the divine Word of which the Gospel of John says that "all things were made through him, and nothing that was made was made without him" (John i,3), and of which Moses' Book of Genesis speaks in terms of the creation of animals "according to their kinds" (Genesis i,24) on the fifth and sixth "days" of the creation.

The animality of divine origin is summarized by the Four prototypes or kind of the holy H a y o t h (the Cherubim). These are: the Bull, the Lion, the Eagle and the Angel or Man. And if one unites these four prototypes in one sole being, one obtains the Sphinx.

The Sphinx is therefore the prototype-synthesis of holy animality, i.e. divine instinctivity, or the principle of spontaneous obedience to God. For "holy animality" means nothing other than "spontaneous obedience to God" or "divine instinct".

The other instincts are due to the evolution of the Serpent. They are summarized by the term bestiality.

Therefore, there are instincts of divine origin and there are bestial instincts. Thus, the instinct which leads to elevation of the spirit and of the heart is symbolized by the Eagle, which iconographic tradition represents as the inspirative principle — or channel of divine inspiration — of John the Evangelist. At the same time, the eagle as the prototype of the bird of prey represents the instinct of aggression and lightning attack. It is the eagle as the instinct of rapaciousness which figured, as the inspiring principle, on the standards of the Roman legions.

Similarly, the Lion symbolizes the instinct that can be designated as "moral courage". The martyrs were representatives of the Lion, and it is the Lion as "moral courage" which is associated with the evangelist Mark in Christian iconography.

But just as there is the Eagle and the eagle, so is there the Lion and the lion. Ferociousness is to moral courage as the lion is to the Lion. The former is a degeneration of the latter.

The Bull is the symbol of the instinct of productive concentration. It underlies the propensity to deep meditation. It is the channel of divine inspiration of the evangelist Luke.

It is the Bull in this sense which has given rise to the cult of the sacred Cow (the female aspect of the Bull) in India. The worship of the cow in India is simply a popular counterpart to the Hindu propensity for meditation.

But again there is the Bull and the bull. The latter is a degeneration of the former. It is concentration of the will on a single thing, rendering the subject blind to everything else. In sacrificing the Bull in the Mithraic mysteries, it was not intended that the propensity to meditation be killed, but rather that impetuosity — rage which blinds — be slain.

The evangelist Matthew, according to iconography, has the Angel or Man as inspiring companion, who represents the propensity to objectivity, which is manifested, for example, in the truthfulness of an epic narrative made by an annalist or chronicler.

But there is objectivity and "objectivity". One can be objective, i.e. impartial, in taking everything equally to heart. And one can be "objective" ("impartial") in assuming

an attitude of equal indifference towards everything.

The former is Angelic objectivity; the latter is its degeneration — it is that of cold and heartless observation. The former manifests itself by means of the instinct that we call c o n s c i e n c e; the latter is manifested in what many take to be the "scientific spirit" and which, truth to tell, is only the propensity towards cynicism.

Thus we have a comparative array of the principal instincts of divine origin and those that have originated since the Fall.

Now, the practical task which follows from this is that of inner alchemy: the transmutation of fallen instincts into their non-fallen prototypes, i.e. the transmutation of "eagle" into Eagle, of "lion" into Lion, of "bull" into Bull, and of "man" into Angel — or, in other words, the task is to establish — or re-establish — the Sphinx above the wheel of instinctivity, to transform the "wheel" of psychic automatism into the Sphinx. How is this to be done?..

By way of metamorphosis, i.e. by alternating contraction and expansion... just as the growth of a plant is the manifestation of two tendencies — a vertical tendency and a horizontal tendency — operating alternately, so that the former pushes upwards and the latter effects its blossoming out, so does psychic metamorphosis operate by restriction of the expansive tendency, which results in elevation, followed by expansion on the new plane attained by elevation which, in turn, will be followed by restriction, resulting in a new elevation, and so on. This is the law of metamorphosis which GOETHE ascertained and studied in the plant realm, and it is also the law of transmutation of psychic forces — the narrow way, or the way of the C r o s s — in the human kingdom. For human beings and plants live under the law of the Cross — the latter organically, the former spiritually. For this reason the plant is a "manual" of practical hermeticism, where one can read the immutable laws of spiritual discipline. SCHILLER, the "brother" of Goethe, understood this, which is why he said:

"Suchst du das Höchste, das Grösste?
Die Pflanze kann es dich lehren,
Was sie willenlos ist, sei du es wollend — das ist's!"

("Dost thou seek the highest, the greatest?
The plant can show it thee.
What the plant is unconsciously, Be thou intentionally — That's it!")

This is because the plant kingdom is the most virginal realm of Nature following the Fall, and because man is on the way to the Reintegration. Every garden therefore preserves something of the Garden of Eden, and can serve as a living library for someone aspiring to Salvation.

Now it is a matter of extending the law of the Cross, which rules the plant realm organically and the human kingdom spiritually, to the animal kingdom also. And this must be done not by training dogs, horses and parrots, but rather by applying the law of the Cross to the inner animality in man's psychic life. It is necessary to restrain the bull in us in order to elevate it to the Bull. This means to say that the instinctive desire which shows itself as rage concentrated upon a single thing, and which blinds one to everything else, is to be restrained and thus elevated to the propensity for profound meditation. This entire operation is summarized in hermeticism by the words "t o b e s i l e n t". The precept "to be silent" is not, as many authors interpret it, solely a rule of prudence, but it is moreover a practical method of transforming this narrowing and blinkering instinct into a propensity towards depth and, correspondingly, an aversion towards all that

is of a superficial nature.

The winged Bull is therefore the result obtained by the procedure of "being silent". This means to say that the Bull is elevated to the level of the Eagle and is united with it. A marriage of the impetus towards the heights and the propensity towards depth is effected by this union. The marriage of opposites — this traditional theme of alchemy — is the essence of the practice of the law of the C r o s s. For the Cross is the union of two pairs of opposites, and the practice of the Cross is the work of conciliation of four opposites — two horizontal and two vertical opposites. The Eagle and the Bull are vertical opposites: they are the tendencies towards the heights and the depths, towards the general and the particular, towards a comprehensive overview and towards the minutia of points of detail.

The Angel and the Lion constitute the other pair of opposites on the cross of man's instinctivity. Here it is a matter of the transformation of combative courage into moral courage — into the courage of conscience. For the instinct that we call "moral courage" is the effect of inspiration on the part of the Angel, and it is by elevating instinctual courage, i.e. the desire for heroism, adventure and struggle, that the latter is united with conscience and becomes the moral courage that we admire in martyrs and saints.

The winged Lion is the result to be obtained by the procedure signified by the term " t o d a r e ", which implies moral courage.

Just as the Bull becomes winged through its conjunction with the Eagle by the practice of "to be silent", and just as the Eagle acquires the constancy and perseverance of the Bull thanks to the practice of " t o w i l l " — so does the Lion acquire wings through its conjunction with the Angel by the practice of " t o d a r e ", and the effect of the inspiration of the Angel, which one's " d a r i n g " produces, becomes spontaneous certainty by the practice signified by the term " t o k n o w ".

These are therefore the four lines of endeavor with a view to achieving the task symbolized by the Sphinx: to be silent, to will, to dare and to know.

"To be silent" is the restriction of the will which elevates itself, following the law of the Cross, as a consequence of this restriction. Then it has its expansion on another plane. There it becomes the true "to will".

Constant attention to conscience restrains impulsiveness and this latter is therefore raised to a new plane, where it has its expansion. The disciplining of impulsiveness by conscience is the practical sense of "to dare" and "to know". For it is only in harmony with knowledge due to conscience that impulsiveness becomes a "legitimate daring" or moral courage.

Here is the principle of hermetic asceticism over the millennia. It is based on the law of the C r o s s; its aim is the Sphinx, which is animality united with humanity.

It is clear that this is a very ancient teaching and that the tenth Arcanum goes back to ancient hermeticism before our era; we are put into contact with the ideas of those who erected the Sphinx and the pyramids. It is intrinsic evidence — not iconographical and historical evidence — which leads us to this conclusion.

And what reinforces this, moreover, is what is missing from Card X. It presents us the wheel of animality and the Sphinx as the solution to the practical problem of animality. Now, a more profound and sustained analysis of the Sphinx and of the whole context of the Card leads us inevitably to four Animals and to all that this comprises: divine and Fallen animality, the Fall and the Reintegration, the principle of practical asceticism, etc. All this can be amplified by the facts and knowledge that modern history, biology and psychology supply us with. But one essential thing is lacking from this Card — this is the " q u i n t a e s s e n t i a ", the "fifth essence" —

which would make the Sphinx a reality for us, but which is not the Sphinx itself. The active principle of the C r o s s — the "fifth essence", without which the whole operation cannot be practiced and would remain only knowledge and a hope — is not to be found indicated here. The Sphinx figures here as the last solution or, rather, as the last enigma.

The absence of a direct indication (for indirectly the whole Card relates to the enigma of the Sphinx and, through this very fact, to the "fifth essence") in the context of the Card of the principle of the New A d a m, who is the "fifth essence" — as we know today equally in esotericism and exotericism — indicates the pre-Christian origin of Card X. From the point of view of iconography it is clearly medieval (of the late Middle Ages), as all the other Cards are, but intrinsically it is older, notably pre-Christian.

Is it the oldest or is it simply the least evolved of the twenty-two Cards of the Major Arcana of the Tarot?

The twenty-two Cards of the Major Arcana of the Tarot being an organism, a complete whole, it is not a question of diverse and disparate origins of particular Cards, but rather of the degrees of their evolution or transformation. For the Tarot, also, is not a wheel, a closed circle, but rather a spiral, i.e. it evolves through tradition and ... reincarnation.

The authors who saw in the Tarot the "Sacred Book of THOTH" (Thoth = Hermes Trismegistus) were both right and wrong at the same time. They were right in so far as they traced back the history of the essence of the Tarot to antiquity, notably to ancient Egypt. And they were wrong in so far as they believed that the Tarot had been inherited from ancient Egypt, i.e. that it had been transmitted from generation to generation subject to minor iconographic changes. As support for their thesis the ingenious story or legend (that you probably know) is recounted concerning the council of Egyptian priests who deliberated on the problem of the preservation of the essence of their wisdom for the generations to come, after the extinguishing of the light of Egypt. Proposition after proposition was rejected — whether to commit the wisdom to paper, stone, metal, etc. — and at last it was decided to entrust the wisdom to a less destructible and more stable agent than paper, stone and metal, i.e. to human vice. Thus a game of cards, the Tarot, was devised, which has come down to us.

But from a iconographic point of view, the Tarot is definitely medieval. And from a historical point of view, there is no evidence that it existed before the end of the XIVth century (cf. Gérard van RIJNBERK, "Le Tarot", Lyons, 1947, pp. 48 ff.). Therefore if it is a matter of a popular game — designed to be as such by Egyptian sages — we would have to have a lot of material concerning the Tarot (as a card-game) during the fourteen, or at least ten, preceding centuries during which there is a complete silence concerning the Tarot.

No, the Tarot is not inherited, it has reincarnated. It has "reincarnated" in conformity with the experience of modern depth psychology of the school of JUNG, who ascertained the upsurge of ancient and even archaic mysteries and cults from the depths of the Unconscious of people in the twentieth century. The Tarot is the Sacred Book of THOTH — not inherited or transmitted — but r e b o r n.

In support of this thesis, let us make a quotation — this time not from a modern legend, but from the text of a Greek Hermetic treatise of considerable antiquity. This is "K o r e K o s m u" or I s i s teaching her son H o r u s the mysteries of heaven. Here it is a

matter of the "Sacred Book of Thoth", concerning its nature and origin. The following is the relevant text:-

"As long as the Craftsman who made the universe willed not to be known, all was wrapped in ignorance. But when he determined to reveal himself, he breathed into certain godlike men a passionate desire to know him, and bestowed on their minds a radiance ampler than that which they already had in their breasts, so that they might first will to seek the yet unknown God, and then have power to find him. But this, Horus my wondrous son, it would not have been possible for men of mortal breed to do, if there had not arisen one whose soul was responsive to the influence of the holy Powers of heaven. And such a man was Hermes, he who won knowledge of all. Hermes saw all things, and understood what he saw, and had power to explain to others what he understood... <u>for what he had discovered he inscribed on tablets, and hid securely what he had inscribed</u>, leaving the larger part untold, <u>that all later ages of the world might seek it</u>...

And thus did Hermes speak: "...And now I must deposit hard by the secret things of Osiris these holy symbols of the cosmic elements, and after speaking over them a prayer, depart to heaven."

It is not fitting, my son, that I should leave this report unfinished; I must tell you all that Hermes said when he was depositing his books. Thus did he speak:

"Ye holy books, which have been written by my perishable hands, but have been anointed with the drug of imperishability by Him who is master over all, <u>remain ye undecaying through all ages</u>, and be ye unseen and undiscovered by all men who shall go to and fro on the plains of this land, until the time when heaven, grown old, shall beget organisms (those that the Creator has named Souls) worthy of you."

Having spoken this prayer over the work of his hands, <u>Hermes was received into the sanctuary of the everlasting zones.</u>" (Kore Kosmu; trsl. Walter Scott, "Hermetica" vol.i, Oxford, 1924, pp.459-461)

This is the Greco-Egyptian version of the nature and origin of the "Sacred Book of THOTH". According to this version the books comprising it were engraved by "perishable hands, but have been anointed with the drug of imperishability" and remain deposited "undecaying through all ages" in the "sanctuary of the everlasting zones" belonging to Hermes, so "that all later ages of the world might seek them..." They are therefore "inscribed" magically in a region <u>between heaven and earth</u>, close enough to the earth to be reached by the souls of seekers on the earth and to awake in them the spirit of quest through their attraction, and far enough removed, on the other hand, so as never to be <u>seized</u> by cerebral intellectuality, i.e. to be taken hold of, analyzed and exploited by it. The <u>original</u> of the "Sacred Book of THOTH" is to be found in the "trans-cerebral" region. For this reason it is necessary to seek for it not in crypts, manuscripts or stone inscriptions, nor even in secret societies or fraternities, but rather in the "sanctuary of the everlasting zones" belonging to Hermes. It is necessary to <u>elevate oneself</u> above the zone of cerebral intellectuality, because the "sacred books" were written, according to the Hermetic treatise that we have quoted, <u>before</u> the formation of the brain. They make an appeal — magically effective across time, "throughout all ages" — to transcend cerebral intellectuality, and to raise the organisms worthy of them, those that the Creator has named <u>S o u l s</u>, to the region where they remain deposited.

This region, this garden of the "holy symbols of the cosmic elements", planted between earth and heaven — these magical formulae, gnostic symbols and mystic fires of the primordial revelation, which constitute the "sanctuary" above cerebral intellectuality and below heaven — is the reality of Hermeticism. It is an incentive across the ages, stimulating human souls to aspire to the vision of "all things" and, having seen this totality, to comprehend it, and having comprehended it, to attain the power of revealing it and showing it. The totality of things (ta sympanta, in Greek) — this is the soul of Hermeticism across time, "throughout all ages". And as the brain is the organ of practical specialization, the appeal and aspiration to the totality of things (ta sympanta) amounts to an appeal and aspiration to transcend the and cerebral intellectuality.

Hermeticism haunts mankind from century to century. Is this because of a pleiad of brilliant writers? Or because of secret societies, or again because of the attraction towards what is secret in general? It could be!

But why are there always writers, and in every epoch? And why are there secret societies? Why, lastly, does the secret itself exercise such an attraction?

Because in the depths of the Unconscious — which knocks at the door and wants to become conscious — there is present the "sanctuary of the everlasting zones", and where the "Sacred Book of Thoth" remains deposited, from whence symbolic and Hermetic works are born, or reincarnate. The Tarot is such a work.

The Tarot has its invisible prototype, and the function and mission of the Tarot is to elevate the Soul to this original. This is why it is a system of spiritual exercises. It gives direction and an impulse to transcend cerebral intellectuality for the Soul to penetrate into the "sanctuary of the everlasting zones" where the "holy symbols of the cosmic elements" remain.

The totality of things. Intuition transcending cerebral intellectuality. Hermeticism. But why Hermeticism? Is this not the aspiration of every metaphysical philosophy and all religious mystical practice?

Certainly the mystical practice of religion transcends cerebral intellectuality. But it does so in order to attain Heaven, and not the intermediary zone between Heaven and earth, where the primordial revelation of the "mysteries of Heaven" are found deposited. Saints live the light, warmth and life of Heaven. Celestial gold, blue and white radiate into their lives and through their lives.

With respect to Hermeticists, they are called — or should I say: condemned? — to live neither for the day of earth nor for the Day of Heaven, but rather are immersed in the Night, in the profound darkness of the mystery of the relationships between Heaven and earth. The Thinking which unites Heaven and earth, which is immanent equally in every earthly phenomenal structure and every celestial noumenal entity, is that which is the vision and comprehension of the totality of things, as the power to reveal it and show it.

Saints do not aspire to cosmic Thought, to a comprehension of the totality of things, but rather to divine Life.

And metaphysicians? Do not idealist philosophers aspire to the totality of things, to grasp it through Thought?

Plato, the father of metaphysical philosophy, had had the experience of trans-cerebral thinking, of thought that is not conceived, but seen. This is why he was able to teach the method of gradual elevation beyond cerebral intellectuality: the elevation from an opinion (Doxa) which is

possible, to a conclusion (d i a n o i a) which is probable, by way of dialectical argument and, lastly, from a probable conclusion to the certainty of immediate perception (e p i s t e m e). It is through "episteme", through immediate perception, that he had had the experience of objective Thought, cosmic Thought, that he named the "world of Ideas". Having had the experience of ideas that are not conceived or invented through subjective cerebral intellectuality, but perceived and contemplated through episteme, Plato commited an error — moreover, quite understandable — of peopling the higher sphere of the spiritual world with ideas, although no "world of ideas" as a separate world or sphere exists. The whole world is peopled only by individual beings, and Ideas live and exist only in them, through them and in relationships between them. Ideas are certainly real, but as an immanent reality, not as a separate reality. Ideas live only in a given consciousness — be it that of God, or that of the angelic hierarchies, or of man.

But they can also be projected outwards (or "engraved", as our ancient treatise expresses it), incarnated in symbols and formulae, and thus conserved in the objective spiritual world. This entire operation of the projection, incarnation and conservation of ideas is called in Hermeticism "w r i t i n g the B o o k". It is of such a "Book" that the Apocalypse speaks when it says:

> "And I saw in the right hand of Him who was seated on the throne a book written within and without, sealed with seven seals." (Revelation v, 1)

Such, also, is the Sacred Book (or Books) of Thoth of which "K o r e K o s m u" speaks.

Now, Plato, in elevating himself above cerebral intellectuality, had a meeting with the Sacred Book of Thoth, with the "holy symbols of the cosmic elements", which are "imperishable and undecaying", and which are in the "Sanctuary of the everlasting zones" belonging to Hermes. As the Hermeticist that he was, he attained to the "sanctuary", but as the speculative philosopher that he was also, he failed to appreciate the magical fact of a living spiritual monument and he gave it an interpretation — which was later declined by his disciple Aristotle — which is not magical but "rational", in postulating a "world of Ideas" beyond the world of phenomena.

Here is the fundamental error of all metaphysical philosophy, from Plato to the present time. It hypostatizes ideas. Ideas live only in the consciousness of individuals or are present in potency in books — in visibly written books, such as the Holy Scripture, in invisible books, which are living spiritual monuments due to the operation of Divine Magic and, lastly, in the whole world, which is also a great book containing in potency the ideas of its creation and destiny expressed through the symbolism of facts.

This is, therefore, how Hermeticism differs from religious mysticism and metaphysical philosophy. Hermeticism as the aspiration to the totality of things is neither a school, nor a sect, nor a community. It is the destiny of a certain class or group of souls. For there are souls who must necessarily aspire to the "totality of things", and who are impelled by the river current of Thought, which never stops, flowing always forward and always further on, without cease... There is no stopping for these souls; they cannot, without renouncing their own lives, leave this river of Thought, which pours without cease — equally during youth, mature age and old age — without halting, from one darkness needing to be illumined to

another darkness needing to be penetrated.

Such was, is, and will be my destiny. And in addressing these Letters to the Unknown Friend, I address myself to he who shares this destiny with me.

Monsieur Professor, forgive me this arrogant and immodest (if not puerile, in your eyes) aspiration — the aspiration to personal certainty with respect to the totality of things — that you, in the industrious and fertile work that you do, hope to attain only after centuries of the collective endeavor of generations of scientists. But at least know that I am infinitely grateful to you, and that you have in me a disciple always eager to learn from you, with respect and gratitude, and who would never presume to teach you, whatever it may be.

Monsieur Priest, pardon me concerning what you think to be human pride which wants to penetrate into the mysteries of God, instead of bowing before divine wisdom and goodness and accepting with humility, as befits a Christian, the revealed truths of Salvation — which, in so far as they are practiced, suffice absolutely for the well-being, happiness and salvation of the soul. I say this to you now as if at confession: I am unable not to aspire to the depth, the height and the breadth of comprehensive truth, to comprehension of the totality of things. I have made the sacrifice of the intellect, the "sacrificium intellectus", in all sincerity and without reserve, but what an intensification of the life of thought, what increased ardor in the aspiration to spiritual knowledge that has followed! I know that the truths of salvation revealed and transmitted by the Council of the Holy Church are both necessary and sufficient for Salvation, and I have no doubt whatever that they are true, and I strive to do my best to practice them; but I am unable to arrest the current of the river of thought which bears me towards mysteries that perhaps are meant only for saints — perhaps only for angels — in any case, that I know without doubt are reserved for beings more worthy than me. Father, will you grant me absolution?

Come what may, I can only echo Jacob's words:
"I will not let you go until you have blessed me."
(Genesis xxxii, 26)

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Letter XI: Meditation on the eleventh Major ARCANUM of the TAROT - "FORCE" - "LA FORCE"

Haec est totius fortitudinis
fortitudo fortis:
quia vincet omnem rem subtilem
omnemque solidam penetrabit

(This thing is the strongest of all powers,
the force of all forces,
for it overcometh every subtle thing
and doth penetrate every solid substance.)
(Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis)

Virgo potens,
Virgo clemens,
Virgo fidelis.

(Powerful Virgin,
Merciful Virgin,
Faithful Virgin)
(Laurentian Litany)

Dear Unknown Friend,

In the preceding Letter the transformation of fallen animality into holy animality was discussed, where the latter is spontaneous obedience to God, without the hindrance of reflection, doubt or motives of interest. Such obedience is basically an instinct. This is why holy animality is represented in the Hermetic tradition, in the vision of Ezekiel, in the Apocalypse of St. John, and in Christian iconography, by four holy Animals, whose synthesis — the Sphinx — is Divine Instinctivity, or the kingdom of God in and through the Unconscious. For God reigns — i.e. he is worshipped, obeyed and loved — not only through explicit theologies and philosophies, or through explicit prayer, meditation and cult-acts, but also in general through the "hunger and thirst for righteousness", for truth, and for beauty, and likewise through each act of generosity and every expression of respect, admiration and adoration... Yes, the world is full of implicit religion, and the inspired saints and poets, who say that the birds "praise God" when they sing, are in no way mistaken. Because it is their tiny life itself which sings the "great life" and makes heard through its countless variations, the same news which is as old as the world and new as the day:- "Life lives and vibrates in me". What homage to the Source of Life is expressed by these small streams of life: the birds which sing!

Religio naturalis. Natural religion, certainly exists and fills the world. Its waters emanate from the Throne of God because — in filling beings, great and small, with the prodigious hope and faith which underlies vital élan — they <u>cannot</u> flow out from anywhere else other than the immediate presence of God. The cascades of hope and faith which are revealed by the great "Yes" that all living beings say, by the very fact that they are living and that they prefer life to death, these cascades cannot bear in themselves anything else other than certain testimony of the fundamental Prescence of God, i.e. the Meaning and Purpose of being alive.

The waves of this testimony reach the unconscious nature of beings and take effect there as this prodigious conviction which underlies vital élan. The "primal revelation", which is referred to by theology and to which "natural religion" is due, is the hope and faith, which vibrates both in the whole world and in each particular being (generally as a subconscious conviction), that life proceeds from a Holy source, that it flows towards an end of supreme worth, and that it is Gift, Benediction and Vocation.

The Mystery of natural Religion, which is at the same time that of vital élan, is found expressed with remarkable clarity in the Apocalypse of St. John:

> "Before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass, like crystal. And round the throne, on each side of the throne, are four Living Creatures, full of eyes in front and behind: the first Living Creature like a lion, the second Living Creature like an ox, the third Living Creature with the face of a man, and the fourth Living Creature like a flying eagle. And the four Living Creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing: Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come!"
> (Revelation iv, 6-8)

This gives a tableau of the working of natural Religion, and its structure and elements. It is the Presence which is reflected in the limpid sea "like crystal", and it is Holy Animality, which never ceases to sing: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come!"

The "sea of glass" is the e y e of the whole of Nature for God; the four Creatures "full of eyes all round and within" — what they are and what they do — represent the natural <u>reaction</u> to the divine Presence. <u>Perception</u> and <u>reaction</u> — here is the essence of the natural Religion which fills the unconscious core of creatures and which manifests itself through vital élan. Because all that lives participates in the collective perception of the "sea of glass", and in the collective reaction of the chorus: "Holy, holy, holy...", for this participation is the Life of life and the source from which the élan of vital élan springs forth.

The saying "Nature is fundamentally supernatural" is therefore profoundly true. For natural and supernatural <u>life</u> always originate from the same source. The source of <u>all</u> life is Religion, conscious or unconscious, i.e. <u>perception</u> of the Presence and <u>reaction</u> to the Presence.

In so far as my heart beats, that I breathe, that my blood circulates — in so far, in other words, that Faith and hope work in me — in so far, thereby, do I take part in the great cosmic ritual in which all beings participate, all the hierarchies from the seraphim down to butterflies... namely, in natural religion's Sacrament of Baptism, which is immersion in the waters of the "sea of glass", and natural religion's Sacrament of Confirmation, which takes place day and night through the chorus of choirs of animated Nature: "Holy, holy, holy..." All beings are baptized and confirmed in natural Religion. Because, in so far as they live, they have faith and hope. But the baptism and confirmation with "Fire and Spirit", the sacraments of Love, surpass those of natural Religion. They bear Forgiveness and Healing to <u>fallen</u> nature.

Fallen Nature also has its unconscious mystery, i.e. its collective instinctivity of <u>perception</u> (its "waters") and its collective instinctivity of <u>reaction</u> (its "creatures"). Again, it is the Apocalypse of St. John which reveals this.

The following is the origin of the "sea" of fallen Nature according to the Apocalypse:

"The Serpent poured water like a river out of his mouth after the Woman, to sweep her away with the flood. But the earth came to the help of the Woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river which the dragon had poured from his mouth." (Revelation xii, 15-16)

The difference between the waters of the "sea of glass" before the Throne and the waters poured forth by the Serpent is that the former are the calm, peace and stability of contemplation, or pure perception — they are "as glass", "like crystal" — whilst the latter are in movement, "poured forth", "like a river", in the pursuit of an aim, namely that of sweeping away the Woman.

In the world there are therefore two different kinds of arriving at a conviction: one can be illumined by the serene clarity of contemplation, or one can be swept away by an electrifying flood of passionate arguments aiming at a desired end. The faith of the illuminated is full of tolerance, patience and calm steadfastness — "like crystal"; the faith of those who are swept away is, in contrast, fanatical, agitated and aggressive — in order to live it needs conquests without end, because it is conquest alone which keeps it alive. The faith of those who are swept away is greedy for success, this being its reason for existence, its criterion and its motivating force. Nazis and Communists are of this faith; i.e. that of those who are swept away. True Christians and true humanists can only belong to the other faith, i.e. that of the illuminated.

In the world there are therefore two kinds of faith, two kinds of instinctivity, two different ways of seeing the world, two different ways of looking at it. There is the open and innocent look which desires only to reflect the light — i.e. which wants only to see — and there is the scrutinizing look, which seeks to find and lay hold of its desired prey. There are spirits whose thought and imagination are put to the service, without reserve, of that which is true, beautiful and good — and there are spirits whose will, infatuated with an aim, make use of thought and imagination so as to win others to their cause, so as to sweep them away by the river of their will. A Plato has never had success as a revolutionary and will never do so. But Plato himself will always live throughout the centuries of human history — he has lived there for twenty-three centuries — and will be in each century the companion of the young and old who love pure thought, seeking only the light which it comprises. Karl MARX, in contrast, has had one century of astonishing success, and has revolutionized the world. He has swept away millions — those who went to the barricades and trenches in civil wars, and those who went to the prisons, either as jailers or as prisoners... But you, as a solitary human soul, a soul of depth and sobriety, what do you owe to Karl Marx? You know quite well that despite the intellectual fracas and the blood and dust provoked by Marx, when once appeased it will be Plato, anew, to whom the young will turn, and also the old, who will love the light of thought in centuries to come. For Plato illumines, whilst Marx sweeps away.

Imagine a christian hermeticist in Moscow's Red Square on the First of May or on the anniversary day of the October Revolution, the Great Socialist Revolution!

But let us return to our Tarot Arcana, seeing that we are still neither swept away by any kind of "mass-movement", nor forced to march in columns and shout with the crowd...

Now, the waters which pour out of the mouth of the Serpent sweep away, whilst those of the "sea of glass" like crystal, before the Throne, illumine.

And just as the collective perception of virgin Nature (the sea of glass before the Throne) is accompanied by the collective reaction to this perception — perpetual adoration by the four Holy Creatures —, so also there is in fallen Nature a reaction to the waters of the Serpent swallowed up by the earth — namely the beasts of the Apocalypse. The Apocalypse does not designate them by the term "Living Creature" (to d z o o n — Living) which it uses to designate the four before the Throne, but rather by the term "Beast" (to therion; Latin, bestia). Thus it opposes animality and bestiality. Genuine animality is holy; bestiality is degenerate.

The Apocalypse speaks of — besides the "red dragon with seven heads and ten horns" (Revelation xii, 3), which is the primordial Serpent — the beast "with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems upon its horns and a blasphemous name upon its heads" (Revelation xiii, 1) which rose out of the sea, and which "was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth" (Rev. xiii, 2); the beast which rose out of the earth, with "two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon" (Rev. xiii, 11); the "scarlet beast, which was full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns" upon which the woman B a b y l o n is seated (Revel. xvii, 3); and finally, the Apocalypse speaks of the "false prophet" who, in the presence of the beast (with two horns), "worked signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped its image" (Rev. xix, 20).

There are therefore f o u r beasts (including the "false prophet" who is a human beast), which correspond to the four Hayoth, the Holy Living Creatures before the Throne.

Since it is a matter here (in the two "tableaus" above) of the mystery of F o r c e (S h a k t i in the T a n t r i c tradition), namely that which moves non-fallen Nature and that which moves fallen Nature, and since the notion "force" comes down to the principle of reaction, which implies the perception preceding it, the two tableaus are summarized in two feminine figures:

> "... a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; she was with child and she cried out in her pangs of birth, in anguish for delivery..." (Revelation xii, 1-2); [and] "... a woman sitting on a scarlet beast... arrayed in purple and scarlet, and bedecked with gold and jewels and pearls, holding in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication".—

The former is the soul of cosmic non-fallen Nature (sun, moon, stars) and the latter is the soul of terrestrial fallen Nature (gold, jewels, pearls and beast). The first is a mother; the second is a prostitute. The one is perception of that which is above and reaction to that which is thus perceived — through its realization ("childbirth"); the other is horizontal perception ("fornication") and reaction to that which is thus perceived — through sterile enjoyment (the cup "full of abominations and the impurities of her fornication"). The one is the Virgin-Mother and the other is the Great Prostitute of Babylon.

The Virgin-Mother. The soul of natural virgin Nature, i.e. non-fallen Nature, which is in the anguish of perpetual childbirth, until the Birth which is the ideal of all births is accomplished.

Evolution... orthogenesis... natural selection... mutations in the hereditary mechanism... Avatars... Advent... Christmas — so many problems and ideas referring to the one great expectation and the one great hope for evolution to attain its ultimate level of flowering and to give its flower: for orthogenesis to produce the being of the culmination of evolution, for

natural selection to result in the future Superman, for the mechanism of heredity to bring its optimum to the light of day, for what we worship above to manifest amongst us below, for the Messiah to come, for God to become man! Evolution, progress, genealogies, prophecies, hopes throughout the centuries — what do they signify at root if not the "anguish of childbirth" across the ages and the constant expectation of the Birth in question? What other ideal could be present — radiating into the depths of all motherhood? What other aim could animate free Nature (natura naturans) throughout the millenia of her activity of generation?

This is therefore the significance of the "Good News": "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John i, 14).

Free Nature, natural Religion, the Woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars, the Virgin Sophia, was present in Mary and it is thus that the soul of non-fallen Nature gave birth to the divine Word.

Free Nature has therefore accomplished her task. She has surpassed herself, and since then the epoch of the Supernatural — the epoch of divine Magic — has begun. Natural Religion is now flooded in the radiance ("Glory") of supernatural Religion, and non-fallen Nature has become a dispensator and cooperator in the Miracles of the new Evolution, the "Evolution" of the Second Birth.

Nevertheless, the Virgin is the principle of Force, i.e. the principle cooperating in the realization of supernatural acts of the Holy-Spirit. This means to say that divine Magic not only does not act against non-fallen Nature but also that the latter cooperates with it. The sun, moon and stars therefore lend their assistance to acts of divine Magic aspiring to the Resurrection. If this were not so, if virgin Nature did not participate in acts of divine Magic, i.e. miracles, then these latter would always be new creations ex nihilo, and not transformations, transmutations and healings. Yet the wine at the wedding of Cana was not created from nothing, but rather it was water which was changed into wine. Let us also note the fact that the Virgin-Mother was not only present at the wedding but also that she took part in an explicit manner in the miracle of changing the water into wine — since it was thanks to her initiative that the miracle took place.

The multiplication of bread in the desert was a miracle of the multiplying of loaves, and not of the creation of bread from nothing. Here also the cooperation of Nature is evident. And the man born blind had to wash in the pool of Siloam in order to be healed by the words of the Master and by the clay made with the Master's saliva that was applied to his eyes. Here the participation of Nature is apparent.

Even the miracle of miracles, the Resurrection itself, was not the creation of a new body, but rather the transformation of the crucified body: the latter had to disappear from the tomb in order that the Resurrected One could appear to Mary Magdalene and the others.

And the Resurrected One himself indicated the continuity of his body by inviting Thomas to put his finger in the marks of the nails and his hand in the wound in his side.

Virgin nature therefore has her part in all the miracles. And it is virgin Nature participating actively in the miracles of divine Magic which is the subject of the eleventh Arcanum of the Tarot, "Force", representing a Woman victorious over a lion, holding its jaws open with her hands. The Woman does so with the same apparent ease — without effort — with which the Magician of the First Arcanum does with his objects. Moreover, she wears a hat similar to that of the Magician — that of a lemniscate. One could say that the two stand equally under the sign of rhythm, the Respiration of Eternity, the sign ∞; and that the two manifest two aspects of a single principle, namely that effort signifies the presence of an obstacle, whilst natural integrity on the one

hand, and undivided attention on the other hand, exclude inner conflict — and therefore every obstacle, and therefore all effort. Just as perfect concentration takes place effortlessly, so does true Force act without effort. Now, the Magician is the Arcanum of the wholeness of consciousness, or concentration without effort; Force is the Arcanum of the natural integrity of being, or power without effort. Because Force subdues the lion not by force similar to that of the lion, but rather by force of a higher order and on a higher plane. This is the Arcanum of "Force".

What, therefore, does Arcanum XI of the Tarot teach?

Through the very tableau that it represents, it says: the Virgin tames the lion and thereby invites us to leave the plane of quantity — for the Virgin is evidently weaker than the lion concerning the quantity of physical force — and to raise ourselves to the plane of quality, for it is evidently there that the superiority of the Virgin over the lion is to be found.

What is it, therefore, that the lion obeys? What is it that he spontaneously yields to? Is he hypnotized? He is not, because the Virgin does not even look at him; her gaze is turned elsewhere ... far from the lion whose jaws she opens. The lion is subjected to no constraint — either physical or hypnotic — therefore he obeys nothing beyond his own nature, and therefore it is his true nature which acts in him. It is the Lion before which the lion yields; it is holy animality which bestial animality obeys.

Now, the Force which the Card invokes is that of natural Religion — that of non-fallen Nature. It is the magic of Virgin Nature which awakens the virgin nature in the lion, and it is this Force that Arcanum XI is called to reveal.

There are two principles which one has to understand and distinguish when one wants to go deeply into the Arcanum of Force. The one is the principle of the "Serpent", and the other is that of the "Virgin". The former is that of opposition from which there proceeds friction which produces energy. The other is concordance from which comes fusion which engenders force.

Thus, enormous energies of a psychic nature are released into the world through a war due to a conflict of interests and pretensions; and energies of an intellectual nature pass from a virtual state to one of actuality when there is a controversy. It is said: "Truth springs forth from the clash of opinions", but actually it is not the truth which springs forth, but rather combative intellectual energy, for truth is revealed through the fusion of opinions and not through a clash. A clash certainly produces intellectual energy, but hardly ever discloses the truth. Quarrelling will never lead to the truth, as long as one does not give it up and seek for peace. Certainly minds can be electrified by polemic, which can cause a veritable intellectual storm in the world; but polemic cannot make the clouds disappear, nor is it given to making the sun shine.

I must confess, dear Unknown Friend, that during my long quest for truth I have been truly enriched by the fruits of the constructive work of many scientists, and by the spiritual endeavor of many mystics and esotericists, and also by the moral example of many human beings of good will — but I owe nothing to polemics or polemicists. I owe nothing to early Christian authors who attack paganism, nor to pagan authors who attack Christianity. I owe nothing to the learned Protestant doctors of the sixteenth century; and the academics of the Enlightenment and the Revolution of the eighteenth century have not taught me anything. Also, I owe nothing to the militant savants of the nineteenth century; and the revolutionary spirits of our century, such as Lenin, have not given me anything.

What I mean to say is that the polemicists enumerated above have given me a lot in the way of objects of knowledge — and it is thanks to them that I have understood the intrinsic sterility of the spirit of opposition as such — but they have given me nothing in the way of

sources of knowledge. In other words, I have learned much through them, but I have learned nothing from them. I owe them what they do not want to be owed them, and I owe them nothing of what they want one to owe them.

Now, it is through the fusion of opinions that truth lights up. Con-versation — the process of "together-versing" (flowing together) — is the very opposite of contro-versy, the process of "contra-versing" (flowing against). Conversation is the operation of the fusion of opinions; it is a work of synthesis. True conversation always has in principle the underlying statement from the Gospel:- "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew xviii, 20). For all true conversation calls upon the transcendent Center, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life.

The Z O H A R is a historical document which, amongst other things, supplies perhaps the the best example of the creative role that conversation can play. There the Rabbis Eleazar, Simeon, José, Abba and others join their efforts and experiences with the aim of arriving together at a deeper, loftier and greater comprehension of the T O R A H. And these Rabbis weep and embrace one another when this happens! From page to page the reader of the Zohar — this remarkable document of spirituality experienced in common, aspired to in common and appreciated in common — learns to understand, appreciate and love more and more the conversation which aims at the fusion and synthesis of opinions.

Now, the force which is at work here is that of the Virgin (which the doctors of the ZOHAR call S H E K I N A H), whilst the energy which electrifies polemicists is that of the Serpent.

The force of Life, and electrical energy — are these not the most clear manifestations of these two principles?

Life and electricity -- I know it, today there is a tendency to confuse them, and to reduce them to electricity alone - must be clearly distinguished. However, electricity is due to the antagonism of opposites, whilst life is the fusion of polarities. EMPEDOCLES (ca. 490 - ca. 430 B.C.) certainly saw this difference and taught that the motion of the four elements — earth, water, air and fire — is due to two opposite causes: Friendship (Love) and Strife (Enmity). The Apocalypse of St. John speaks of the War between the celestial armies of the Archistrategist M I C H A E L and the red dragon with his hordes, on the one hand, and the "h i e r o s g a m o s", the wedding of the Lamb and his Bride, on the other hand.

The Dragon (or "Serpent of old") opposes himself to higher spheres — here is the origin of "terrestrial" electricity; the hierarchies, represented by the Archistrategist Michael, have to resist the Dragon — here is the origin of "celestial" electricity. It is celestial electricity which was the means of the miracles of divine Anger in the Old Testament: the flash of fire that came out of the tabernacle and consumed Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron (Leviticus x, 1-2); the Fire of the Lord which burned in the camp at Taberah and consumed some outlying parts of the camp (Numbers x, 1-3); the earth which opened its mouth and swallowed up "Korah and all his men (Numbers xvii, 32); Uzzah struck down on the spot, having taken hold of the ark, because the oxen stumbled and made it tilt (II Samuel vi, 6-7); the Fire from above which consumed Elijah's burnt offering before the prophets of Baal (I Kings xviii, 38); the fire which descended twice and both times consumed fifty soldiers and their captains, near the hill at the top of which Elijah was sitting (II Kings i, 10-12); the miracles of Elisha (II Kings), etc. And it is terrestrial electricity of which we make use of not only in the technical field of our civilization but also in hypnosis, in demagogic propaganda, in movements of revolutionary masses... For electrical energy has its analogous forms on various planes: physical, psychic and even mental.

With respect to Life, it is like the water of the "sea of glass, like crystal" coming from the

Throne; it is Force, natural Religion, the soul of non-fallen Nature, the Virgin.

Virginity is obedience to the Divine, and is therefore in harmony and cooperation with the Divine. The Virgin is therefore the soul of life, i.e. Force, which exercizes no constraint, but moves all. And the lion of Card XI is obedient to the Force of its own life, to the profound impulse at the very depths of its own being, when it obeys the Virgin who opens its mouth.

Scripture has two different terms in Greek for "life": "Z o e" and "b i o s". The first signifies "vivifying Life" and the second "derived life". "Zoe" is to "bios" as free Nature (natura naturans) is to necessitated Nature (natura naturata) (cf. also the philosophy of John SCOTUS ERIGENA). "Zoe" is therefore the source and "bios" is that which flows, having come from the source. It is "bios" which flows from generation to generation; and it is "zoe" which fills the individual in prayer and meditation, in acts of sacrifice and participation in the Sacred Sacraments. "Zoe" is vivification from above in a vertical sense; "bios" is vitality which, although it once issued from the same source above, passes in the horizontal from generation to generation.

Now, "bios", biological life, flows in the domain of the Serpent. For this reason it is mingled with electrical energy in an inextricable way; biological processes cause electrical currents and the latter influence the former in living organisms. But it is not "bios" which drains the resources of the organism — rather, it is electricity. For electricity is generated through chemical decomposition and by the opposition of contrary forces, i.e. by internal friction in the organism. This is what causes fatigue, exhaustion, senility and death. "Bios", as such, is never tired or exhausted, and never grows old or dies. The heart and respiration do not need any rest, whereas the remainder of the organism — above all the brain — is plunged into a state of rest each night, through sleep, having been drained during the preceding day. Then it is "bios" which, during sleep, repairs the damage done to the organism by electricity. Sleep is the time when electrical activity is reduced to a minimum and when "bios" prevails.

A tree, where "bios" always prevails — which "sleeps" continually, so to speak — is in principle immortal. For it is not the exhaustion of its interior vitality, but rather mechanical destruction from outside which puts an end to its life. A tree does not die of old age; it is always killed — uprooted by a storm, struck by lightning, dragged down by the force of gravity, or cut down by man.

The fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil — the fruit of the polarity of opposites — is therefore electricity; and electricity entails fatigue, exhaustion, death. Death is the price that is paid for the knowledge of good and evil, i.e. the price of life amidst opposites. For it is electricity — physical, psychic and mental — which was introduced into the being of Adam-Eve — and thereby into the whole of life-endowed Nature — from the moment when Adam-Eve entered into communion with the tree of opposites, that is to say with the principle of electricity. And it is thus that death entered into the domain of life-endowed Nature.

Nevertheless, life-endowed Nature is not a uniform and integral entity. It is divided. There is above all division according to the preponderant roles played by "bios", electricity and "zoe". The soul of life-endowed Nature in which "bios" is subordinated to electricity is the "woman Babylon" of the Apocalypse. Life-endowed Nature in which "bios" and electricity are in equilibrium is the "suffering creation" of which St. Paul said that it "sighs for deliverance" (Romans viii, 19-23). And, lastly, life-endowed Nature in which "bios" dominates electricity — and therefore is itself dominated by "zoe" — is non-fallen Nature. Its soul is the celestial Virgin — the High Priestess of natural Religion.

This is what constitutes the Arcanum of the eleventh Card of the Tarot.

One could formulate it as follows:-

F o r c e I s V i r g i n i t y.

What is Virginity?

The state of virginity is that of the consonance of three principles — the Spiritual, the Psychic and the

Bodily. A being in whom Spirit, Soul and Body are in consonance is in a state of virginity. In other words, it is the principle of the unity of three worlds: Heaven, Purgatory and Earth.

From the point of view of the Earth, it is complete <u>obedience</u> of the body to the soul.

From the point of view of Purgatory, it is complete obedience of the soul to the breath of eternity — or <u>Chastity</u>.

From the point of view of Heaven, it is absolute receptivity to the Divine — or Poverty.

Virginity is therefore the unity of that which is above and that which is below, and it is this which is <u>Force</u>, i.e. the action of three worlds in harmony. Because Force — "the strongest of all powers, the force of all forces" (Tabula Smaragdina, 9) — is the unity of three worlds in action, that is to say in action where the Divine Spirit, the Heart and the Body are united.

It is the Virgin speaking through SOLOMON when he writes:

"Before his works of old,
I was set up from everlasting,
From the beginning, or ever the earth was.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
When there were no springs abounding with water;
Before the mountains had been shaped,
Before the hills, I was brought forth;
Before he had made the earth with its fields,
Or the first of the dust of the world,
When he established the heavens, I was there,
When he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
When he made firm the skies above,
When he established the fountains of the deep,
When he assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters might not transgress his command,
When he marked out the foundations of the earth,
Then I was at work beside him." (Proverbs, viii, 22-30)

"When he marked out the foundations of the earth,
Then I was at work beside him" --- Here is a clear statement of the role of the Virgin, who cooperates with the Divine not only in the miracles of Redemption but also in those of Creation.

C o - c r e a t r i x, C o - r e d e m p t r i x, Co-sanctificatrix, V i r g o, M a t e r, R e g i n a . . . .

This formula summarizes the thoughts relating to the principle of virginity. Here is the place to point out that principles do not exist separately from the beings who incarnate and manifest them. Principles as such are always <u>immanent</u>. This is why the reality of the principle of the Divine is God; the reality of the principle of the Divine Word is Jesus - CHRIST; and the reality of the principle of fertile and productive virginity is M a r y - S o p h i a. Mary-Sophia represents, i.e. incarnates and manifests, the principle of Virginity, that of non-fallen Nature, that of natural Religion, and that of Force. . . . She is the central individuality — the "Queen" — of the whole domain in question. She is the conscious individual soul who is the concrete ideal — the "Queen" — of Virginity, Motherhood, and creative-productive or queenly Wisdom (queenly = regnal from "regina" = queen).

There is not a shadow of doubt for anyone who takes the spiritual life of mankind seriously, even if he is short of authentic spiritual experience, that the Blessed Virgin is not an ideal only, nor a mental image only, nor an "archetype" of the Unconscious (of depth-psychology), nor, lastly, an occultistic "egregore" — a collective astral creation of believers —, but rather a concrete and living individuality, like you or me, who loves, suffers and rejoices. It is not only the children of Fatima, the child Bernadette at Lourdes, the children of La Salette-Fallavaux, and the children of Beauraing in Belgium, who have witnessed the "Lady", but also innumerable adults across the

centuries, including our own. Numerous meetings still remain intimate and undivulged (I know of three series of such meetings, including one in Tokyo, Japan), but one series of meetings with the Blessed Virgin took place recently in Amsterdam in the Netherlands, where the Blessed Virgin manifested herself as the "Lady of all Nations" (De Vrouwe van alle Volkeren) and inaugurated a prayer-movement with a special prayer, with a view to saving all nations from "degeneration, disaster and war" (verwording, rampen en oorlog).* I may add that I went to Amsterdam in order to make as scrupulous an investigation as possible, and the result of this investigation there (confirmed subsequently by experiences of a personal nature) was complete certainty not only with respect to the authenticity of the experiences of the seer (a woman of forty years of age) but also with respect to the authenticity of the Subject of these experiences.

In writing of these things, I can only agree with the sentiment expressed by Rabbi Simeon in the ZOHAR, who exclaimed: "Woe to me if I tell and woe to me if I do not tell! If I tell, then the wicked will know how to worship their master; and if I do not tell, then the companions will be left in ignorance of this discovery!" (Zohar 11b; trsl. H. Sperling and M. Simon, 5 vols., London-Bournemouth, 1949, vol. i, p. 48)

Be that as it may, meetings with the Blessed Virgin are so numerous and well-attested that one must certainly at least admit their objective reality. I say, "at least", because this does not satisfy the demands of my conscience. In fact, I would not be entirely honest or frank with you, dear Unknown Friend, if I were not to say what is an absolutely sure result (in the inner forum of my consciousness) of more than forty years of endeavor and experience. It is the following:-

One meets the Blessed Virgin inevitably when one attains a certain intensity of spiritual aspiration, when this aspiration is authentic and pure. The very fact of having attained a spiritual sphere which comprises a certain degree of intensity and purity of intention puts you in the presence of the Blessed Virgin. This meeting belongs to a certain "sphere" — i.e. to a certain degree of intensity and purity of spiritual aspiration — of spiritual experience, just as the experience of having a mother belongs naturally to human family life on earth. It is therefore as "natural" for the spiritual domain as the fact of having a mother is natural in the domain of one's terrestrial family. The difference is that on earth one can certainly be motherless, whilst in the realm of the spiritual this can never happen.

Therefore the thesis that I am advancing with one hundred per cent conviction is that every hermeticist who truly seeks authentic spiritual reality will sooner or later meet the Blessed Virgin. This meeting signifies, apart from the illumination and consolation that it comprises, protection against a very serious spiritual danger. For he who advances in the sense of depth and height in the domain of the Invisible one day arrives at the sphere known by esotericists as the "sphere of mirages" or the "zone of illusion". This zone surrounds the Earth as a belt of illusory mirages. It is this zone which the prophets and the Apocalypse designate "Babylon". The soul and the queen of this zone is in fact Babylon, the great Prostitute, who is the adversary of the Virgin.

Now, one cannot pass by this zone without being enveloped by perfect purity. One cannot traverse it without the protection of the "mantle of the Blessed Virgin" — the mantle which was an object of worship and of a special cult in Russia ("Pokrov Presvyatyya Bogoroditsy" — Mantle of the Very

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* Translator's note: The prayer revealed by the Blessed Virgin — "the Lady of All Nations" — in Amsterdam on February 11, 1951, has been translated into English as follows:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father,
Send now your Spirit over the earth.
Let the Holy Spirit live in the hearts of all peoples,
That they may be preserved from degeneration, disaster and war.
May the Lady of All Nations, who once was Mary,
Be our Advocate. Amen."

(Cf. "The Messages of the Lady of All Nations", Amsterdam, 1971)

Holy Mother of God). It is therefore the protection of this "mantle" which is absolutely necessary in order to be able to traverse the "sphere of mirages" without falling prey to the influence of its illusions.

The way of hermeticism, solitary and intimate as it is, comprises authentic experiences from which it follows that the Roman Catholic Church is, in fact, a depository of Christian spiritual truth, and the more one advances on the way of free research for this truth, the more one approaches the Church. Sooner or later one inevitably experiences that spiritual reality corresponds — with an astonishing exactitude — to what the Church teaches: that there are guardian Angels; that there are saints who participate actively in our lives; that the Blessed Virgin is real; and that She is almost precisely as She is understood, worshipped and portrayed by the Church; that the sacraments are effective, and that there are seven of them — and not two, or three, or even eight; that the three sacred vows — of Obedience, Chastity and Poverty — constitute in fact the very essence of all authentic spirituality; that prayer is a powerful means of charity, for beyond as well as here below; that the ecclesiastical hierarchy reflects the celestial hierarchical order; that the Holy See and the Papacy represent a mystery of divine Magic; that hell, purgatory and heaven are realities; that, lastly, the Master himself — although He loves everyone, Christians of all confession as well as all non-Christians — abides with His Church, since He is always present there, since He visits the faithful there and instructs His disciples there. The Master is always findable and meetable there.

Let us return to the Arcanum of Force.

It is said that "union makes force", and one understands by this the alliance of individual wills with a view to achieving a common aim. It is the formula for the quantitative increase of force.

With respect to qualitative force, it would be appropriate to say that "unity is force", because one is strong only in so far as there is unity of Spirit, Soul and Body, i.e. in so far as there is Virginity. It is inner conflict that renders us weak: the fact that we serve two or even three masters at the same time.

The Emerald Table of Hermes states not only the principle of universal Analogy, but also that of universal Force: "to accomplish the miracles of one thing".

It teaches concerning the "strongest of all powers, the force of all forces, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance".

The force taught by the Emerald Table is the unity in action of heaven and earth, for Thelema (the fundamental will) "doth ascend from earth to heaven; again it doth descend to earth, and uniteth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior".

Let us now examine the two aspects of Force which the Emerald Table speaks of, namely that it "overcometh every subtle thing" and "doth penetrate every solid substance".

1/ It overcometh every subtle thing.

The deeper meaning — mystical, gnostic, magical and Hermetic — of "overcoming" is to change the enemy into a friend. To render him impotent only is not yet victory. Thus the Germany of 1914 was certainly rendered impotent in 1918, but was not overcome. The year 1939 proves this. But after the defeat of 1945, Germany was certainly overcome — in so far as she is sincerely allied to her old adversaries.

The same applies to Japan as a State.

On another plane, it is likewise true that the Devil will be overcome only at the moment when his voice — no matter whether it is rough or smooth — will be heard in chorus with the choirs of celestial hierarchies praising God.

Saul of Tarsus was the very soul of the persecution of Christians; PAUL the Apostle was the very soul of the work of conquest of the so-called "pagan" world for Christianity. Here is a case of authentic

victory in the true sense of the word.

And it is authentic victory that one must hope for and wait for in the conflict that tradition represents as the struggle between the Archistrategist Michael and the Dragon. The day when it is achieved will be the day of a new festival — the festival of the coronation of the Virgin on Earth. For then the principle of opposition will be replaced on earth by that of collaboration. This will be the triumph of Life over Electricity. And cerebral intellectuality will then bow before Wisdom (SOPHIA) and will unite with her.

"To overcome every subtle thing" is therefore equivalent to changing opposing forces — mental, psychic and electrical — into friendly and allied forces. The "subtle things" to overcome are the intellectual forces of temptation based on doubt, the psychic forces of temptation based on sterile enjoyment, and the electrical forces of temptation based on power.

In the last analysis, the "subtle things" meant here are therefore equivalent to temptations. However every temptation is similar to a two-way flow of traffic. Because when evil tempts good, it is itself at the same time "tempted" by the latter. Temptation always entails contact, and therefore an exchange of influence. Every beautiful temptress, in attempting to tempt a saint, risks finishing up by "wetting his feet with her tears, wiping them with the hair of her head, kissing them and anointing them with ointment" (Luke vii, 38). Do we not have prefigured here the victory over the "great prostitute Babylon"? Have we not discovered the root and core of the much celebrated and lamented "fall of Babylon", described in chapters 17 and 18 of the Apocalypse?

Doubt, sterile enjoyment, power. These constitute together the "technology" of temptation.

First of all, doubt. It is the principle of division and opposition, and therefore of illness. For just as intellectual doubt divides the intellect by confronting it with two contrary tableaus, and reduces it to the impotence of indecision, so is bodily illness a "doubt" in the organism, i.e. two tendencies, opposed to one another, reducing it to impotence and constraining it to remain in bed.

Doubt is to faith as the sight of eyes suffering from astimgatism is to normal eyesight. Just as normal eyes either do not see or see together, so does faith see — whether more or less is not important — with the "higher eye" and the "lower eye" together. For certainty is due to the coordinated vision of the higher or transcendent Self — this is the "higher eye" — and the lower or empirical self, which is the "lower eye".

Doubt appears when the "higher eye" and the "lower eye" do not see together. There is then a spiritual astigmatism, a lack of coordination between the two "seers" in man.

Doubt is a beast with two horns, since it only bifurcates.

However, doubt that is mastered, under the control of the will and put into its service, proves to be prodigiously useful, as the whole history of science shows. There doubt is utilized as the instrument of scientific faith; there one doubts within the precise limits of the scientific method, being guided by — and in — the interests of scientific faith. If PASTEUR had not doubted spontaneous generation on the one hand, and if he had not had faith in observation and experimentation, on the other hand, we would not now benefit from the fruits of the "Pasteurian revolution" in biology and medicine.

Productive though it is in the scientific domain, doubt nevertheless entails expenses that must be paid. Its practice, be it only by using it as a method, results in partial blindness; it renders us one-eyed. For the fact of regularly turning away from the higher eye, from its message and testimony, and confining oneself to the lower eye (the five senses plus cerebral intellectuality), cannot fail, sooner or later, to have its effect, i.e. to render one-eyed he who assiduously practices the use of one eye instead of two.

And exactly as the great doctors of theology, metaphysics and mysticism of the Middle Ages

proved to be sterile in what concerns medicine, biology, physics, physiology and other sciences — the help of which saves, in France alone, 69,000 human lives each year from the bane of tuberculosis, and has reduced mortality due to typhoid fever by more than 97 percent, mortality due to diptheria also by 97 percent, that due to scarlet fever by 98 percent, etc. (cf. Dr. Étienne MAY, "La medicine, son passé, son présent, son avenir", Paris, 1957, pp. 336–337) — so are the doctors of the sciences of our time sterile in what concerns the vital spiritual needs of mankind. The former had an eye only for the spiritual; the latter have an eye only for the temporal.

Is it necessary to be one-eyed in order to produce something of value — whether scientific or spiritual? No. Individual examples, including the recent example of the author of "The Phenomenon of Man" and "Le milieu divin", prove it. And esoteric Hermeticism, i.e. Hermeticism cultivated within the inner forum of consciousness, is called to play a role — whether visible or invisible is of little importance — as a link in each individual's inner forum of consciousness, between what is given by the two eyes. It can certainly be an agent in establishing coordination of the two eyes, between culture and Civilization, between Spirituality and Progress, between Religion and Science. It can act as a healing agent in this singular contemporary illness (which is a kind of schizophrenia) of the dissociation between spirituality and intellectuality — but it can do so only in the inner forum of each individually, in order to guard against arrogating functions of general significance belonging properly to Church and Academia. Briefly, the role which it is called to play is anonymous and intimate, and is not provided with the means of the armory of collectives, such as pamphlets, press, radio, television and congresses where a great din is made. The magic of the constant work of service done in silence — this is what it is a matter of.

A secret, then? Not at all, for a private thing is not a secret thing. The private life is not a secret life. Silence as the essential condition for intimate work is in no way equivalent to a jealously guarded secret. Just as Trappist monks maintain silence without anyone suspecting them of wanting to keep secrets, so is the community composed of hermeticists scattered in the world in the right to be silent, in order to maintain the atmosphere of privacy essential for its work, without it being suspected of dark secrets. Authentic spiritual life requires the inviolable sanctuary of privacy — which has nothing in common with "initiation secrets" or those of "secret societies", whose secrets, furthermore, inevitably become "open secrets".

Next, sterile enjoyment. The role that certain schools of philosophy and psychology assign to pleasure as the final cause of all human activity — including moral activity — is well known. According to them, man would not have any desire to act if he did not have the promise of real or imagined pleasure.

What is pleasure? It is the lowest constituent of the scale: pleasure - joy - blissfulness - beatitude. It is only the psycho-physical signal announcing accord between what one desires and what one attains. Being only a signal, it does not have moral value in itself; it is desire, whose satisfaction it signals, which falls under the moral qualification of good or evil. This is why pleasure can be followed by joy or disgust, according to the case.

Pleasure is therefore a reaction — at the surface of man's psychic being — to objective events. In other words, a life dedicated to the pursuit of pleasure alone would be the most superficial that one could imagine for a human being.

Joy is more profound than pleasure. It is still an index, but what it indicates is deeper than the relationship between a desire and the event of its being satisfied. Joy is the state of soul which participates most intensely in life and experiences it in appreciating its value. Joy is the spreading of the soul beyond the limits of conscious awareness. It signifies an augmentation of the soul's vital élan.

Blissfulness is the state of the human being where Spirit, Soul and Body are united in a comprehensive rhythm. It is the rhythm of the spiritual, psychic and bodily life brought into harmony.

Lastly, beatitude transcends blissfulness in so far as the state which it comprises is higher than that in which the rhythm of the human Spirit, Soul and Body holds sway; it is the state of the actual Presence of the "Fourth" — of God. It is therefore the state of "beatific vision" (visio

beatifica) of Christian tradition.

Pleasure is therefore the most peripheral and superficial on the scale of blessedness. Yet in the technique of temptation it plays the same role with regard to the soul as doubt does with regard to the spirit. For just as doubt reduces the spirit to impotence, so does pleasure (or sterile enjoyment) reduce the soul to impotence, to a state of passivity. It enslaves it and changes it from the subject into an object of action.

Lastly, <u>power</u>. Here again schools of philosophy and psychology have erected the "will-to-power" as the supreme principle of human activity. According to them man aspires only to power; and religion, science and art are only means to this end.

Now, it is true that no one desires powerlessness as such. And if we worship the Crucifix, which is the symbol of complete outer powerlessness, we do so because it is at the same time the symbol of supreme inner power. For there is power and Power. The one enslaves and the other liberates. The one constrains; the other inspires.

True power always appears as powerlessness. For it is always due to a kind of crucifixion. False power, however, crucifies others. This is because it knows of no other growth than that at the expense of others. An autocrat is powerful only when he has reduced to impotence all other candidates — all the independent elements in his country; a hypnotist is powerful in so far as the number of people who resist his hypnosis is small; a philosophical system is powerful in so far as it <u>compels</u> minds to accept it by the weight of the totality of its arguments (Fichte attempted to <u>compel</u> the reader to understand — Ein Versuch, die Leser zum Verstehen zu zwingen); lastly, a machine is powerful in so far as it is capable of rendering powerless the obstacles which prevent it from functioning.

Now, the technique of temptation in the domain of power consists in substituting false power for the true — in the substitution of the power of compulsion or "Electricity" for that of freedom of inspiration and healing or "Life" (zoe).

Sacred Magic has nothing in common with the power which compels. It operates only with currents of Life or "zoe" — spiritual, psychic and physical. Even its "armory" — such as the "swords" of the Archangel MICHAEL and the Holy Cherubim, Guardian of the Gate of Eden — are showers of rays of Life whose intensity is such as to repulse or put to flight anyone who is either opposed to Life, or who cannot support its intensity, and on the other hand it attracts and vivifies anyone who aspires to Life and who can support its intensity. Who knows how many people otherwise ill or despairing owe the re-establishment of their physical or psychic health to the "sword" of the Archangel Michael? There are no statistics of this kind, but if there were, one would probably be astonished at the number of "victims" of the Flaming sword!

Be that as it may, the "swords" in question are powerful arms of true power. They are the fruits of outer powerlessness, i.e. they are forces due to <u>crucifixion</u>. For the guardian of freedom is, by this very fact, the victim of freedom; he has also to endure the age-old abuse of the freedom that he protects. It is the age-old powerlessness towards the abuse of freedom — therefore it is an age-old crucifixion — which is the source of power concentrated in the "sword" of the Archistrategist MICHAEL.

It is the same with the "flaming sword" of the Cherubim "set in the east of Eden". Here again it is divine impotence in relation to human freedom, which latter chose the way of the Fall — impotence which nourished and concentrated the "sword".

Thus, here is the choice which each of us is called to make: the choice between the power of crucifixion and that of compulsion. To pray or to order: Which would we prefer?

"Electricity" in its triple form — physical, psychic and mental — is an instrument which lends itself prodigiously to the service of the will-to-power, i.e. to the desire to order and subjugate. For this reason it is a temptation for mankind. Mankind is confronted by the choice

between the power of sacred magic and that of mechanics, a choice which, in the last analysis, amounts to one between Life (zoe) and Electricity.

These are therefore the three principle "subtle things" which are overcome by Force or Virginity.

2/ It doth penetrate every solid substance.

Solidity is the experience of an obstacle to our freedom of movement. Air is certainly not it, whilst a wall of stone certainly is. Similarly, mistrust towards you can erect a veritable psychic wall which can be an insurmountable obstacle to your movement aiming at contact and the communication of ideas. Similarly, again, a well-defined and rigid intellectual system can render you dumb with regard to the person who is held under its power. It would be impossible, for example, to reach the inner organ of comprehension of an orthodox Marxist or a Freudian psychoanalyst in speaking to them of authentic mystical experience. The one would hear only what lends itself to interpretation by the concept of "narcosis", remaining quite deaf to the rest, and the other would have an open ear only for that which lends itself to interpretation by the concept of "sublimation of libido", i.e. For what lets itself be reduced to the play of sexuality. Therefore, here again there is a wall.

Now, there is physical, psychic and mental "solidity". All three forms of solidity have in common that they are experienced as obstacles to our movement. They are experienced as impenetrable.

Nevertheless, the Emerald Table affirms that "every solid substance", i.e. each physical, psychic and mental obstacle, is certainly penetrable for Force or Virginity.

How?

By action opposite to that of explosion, i.e. by emollient action. With regard to a mental obstacle presented by a rigid intellectual system, Force will not occupy itself with the mental formation itself, but will admit its breath into the heart of the person concerned. The heart having tasted Life, the creative movement of Life will pass its breath to the head and will breathe movement into the mental formation. This latter, having been set in motion — not by doubt, but rather by creative élan — will lose its rigidity and will become fluid. It is thus that the liquefaction of crystallized mental formations is effected.

With respect to psychic obstacles, it is again emollient action which effects the transformation of a psychic complex from rigidity into sensitivity. Here again it is the breath of Life which dissolves the complex, by way of the heart so that the mistrust, fear or hate, concentrated in the complex is dispersed and the soul is left free of the blinding influence of the psychic complex.

Lastly, physical obstacles exist for Force, i.e. for the radiation of Life, only in so far as they are due to morbid processes of crystallization in living organisms. If we give them a common comprehensive name, it is "sclerosis"; this constitutes the obstacle in general. Sclerosis is the process of gradual alienation of the body from the soul and spirit. A corpse is the limit and end of this, because the corpse is a body completely alienated with regard to the soul and spirit.

> "With regard to arterio-sclerosis, it is to a certain extent a natural modification of the arteries with age. And thus, pushing this to an absurd extreme, one could almost say that, all other illnesses being suppressed, sclerosis of the arteries — in the long run obligatory — would alone prevent us from becoming immortal." — says Dr. Etienne MAY in making an assessment from the standpoint of modern day medicine — ("La médicine, son passé, son présent, son avenir, Paris, 1957, p. 341).

Sclerosis is therefore death itself, which is at work during life in modifying, little by little, the living body into a corpse. At least, this is what it appears to be, seen in the light of modern medicine and biology.

There are, nonetheless, two different ways of dying. The one is where the body refuses to serve as the instrument for the soul — which is the case with sclerosis. The other is that

where the principle which vivifies and animates the body retires and thus is missed by the body; it is then the soul which quits the body.

In the first case, it is the body which expels the soul; in the second case, it is the soul which refuses to make use of the body any longer. One dies, therefore, because the body becomes unserviceable for life or, otherwise, because life itself retires from the body. In the latter case one certifies from a clinical point of view a generally increasing lapse of biological functions which advances to the point where the activity of respiration and circulation halts, i.e. where clinical death takes place. This can happen in the state of deep sleep, at the hours when vitality is normally at its minimum — between two and four o'clock in the morning. Then one says that death was due to old age, pure and simple — without any specific ailment, including sclerosis, being the cause. With respect to hardening of the arteries or arterio-sclerosis, this process has long been considered as an inevitable consequence of advancing age." But one knows nowadays that there is arterio-sclerosis in young people and that there are old people whose arteries (without speaking of the brain and nervous system) remain supple" (Dr. Étienne MAY, "La médicine, son passé, son présent, son avenir", Paris, 1957, p. 346). One can therefore die with supple arteries, without cancer and without being the victim of pathological viruses. One can depart entirely, just as one departs partially when one falls asleep.

Now, there are several modes of sleeping. There is sleep and Sleep. You can believe, or not believe, in the testimony of the Cabbala, which describes what is said to happen during the sleep of the righteous, during the sleep of ordinary people, and during the sleep of sinners. (It is described how at the hour of midnight the Ancient of Days draws near to the earth and arrives at the Gate of Eden, where the souls of the righteous meet him, etc.) However, there is no one who does not know from sure experience what arises during sleep at night, in diverse states not only of health but also of the soul. The overwhelming cares of one day can be changed during sleep into things of secondary importance and can even appear insignificant, whilst insignificant things of the day before, which skated almost imperceptibly across the screen of your memory before sleep, can acquire in dream a singular importance which was not at all surmised the preceding day. How many different ways of awakening! How moods, states of mind, desires, general states of soul, differ when you awake, for example, after a Christmas night or an Easter night, or some night in November or February....

If the ways of <u>awakening</u> are as different as black and white, it is because there are as many different kinds of <u>sleep</u>.

Just as there are several modes of <u>sleeping</u>, so there are several modes of <u>dying</u>. It is again the Cabbala which makes mention of this and which describes a whole scale of ways of dying, the summit of which would be death due to the kiss of the Eternal One. According to the Cabbala, conscious or unconscious <u>ecstasy</u> would therefore be the most sublime cause of death.

Must an ecstatic rapture necessarily be sudden or can it be slow and gradual as well? Consider the process of death where it is not the body which refuses to serve the soul, but rather where it is the soul itself which gradually quits the body — could this not be the visible manifestation of invisible ecstasy, of the increasing attraction of the Divine working in the very depths of the soul? Would not increasing <u>nostalgia</u> suffice to explain the gradual departure of vital élan that is recorded in the case of general decline resulting in death?

Be that as it may, this is not only what the Cabbala teaches, but also contemporary Christian Hermeticism. The hermetic teaching is as follows:

During the period of preparation for so-called "natural" death — i.e. caused neither by the unserviceability of the organism, nor by violent interference from outside, nor by poisoning — a well-defined process takes place in the "vital body" (the "etheric body" or "n e p h e s c h" according to the Cabbala). There the vital forces concentrate little by little in the region of the eight-petalled lotus, which is the crown center. To the extent that this concentration in the crown region of the head (in fact, even above the head, if one understands by "head" the physical brain) takes place, vital activity diminishes — at first in the lower region of the organism, i.e. the genital and intestinal

region, then in the region of the stomach, and lastly in the central region in the neighborhood of the heart. At the moment when the concentration of vitality at the crown center is complete, the heart and also the circulatory and respiratory system cease their activity — this is the moment of death.

Now, the process here corresponds to the ecstasy to which one aspires in the practice of Yoga. For the state of samadhi, or yogic ecstasy, is realized, in terms of esoteric physio-psychurgy, by the concentration of energy — arising from the lower region of the body — in the crown region, in the region of the "thousand-petalled lotus" (Sahasrara). The eight-petalled lotus is designated in India as "thousand-petalled" because of its intense scintillation, which gives the impression of a multitude of petals (a "thousand"). Once the energy is concentrated in the crown region the body is reduced to a state of stupor, and the consciousness of the self departs and is united with the consciousness of the transcendent Self — which is the state of samadhi or ecstasy. Samadhi or yogic ecstasy is a temporary or artificial death.

Although the Christian ecstasy of "sursum corda" (elevation of the heart) differs essentially from samadhi, there is no reason to deny the reality of yogic ecstasy or the fact that it is an authentic ecstasy, albeit not the only possible one.

It is therefore quite justifiable to say that so-called "natural" death is fundamentally a natural ecstasy — notably, a natural samadhi, where the transcendent Self accomplishes union with the personal Self, in withdrawing it from the body and uniting with it.

It is, again, a case where Force "doth penetrate the solid substance" when one dies a natural death, having supple arteries and a normal nervous system.

It is then Force (ζωη, Zoe) which keeps the blood vessels supple through its emollient action, and which renders natural death possible as a result of "natural ecstasy" or the gathering of vital forces above.

These, therefore, are some of the facts and thoughts which can contribute to an understanding of the statement from the Tabula Smaragdina:

"It doth penetrate every solid substance".

The concept of Force is that of an intermediary between pure Consciousness and Manifestation. It is the link between the Idea and the Phenomenon.

Force has two aspects — that of electricity and that of life (or struggle on the one hand, and cooperation, on the other). These two aspects correspond to Nahash (the Serpent) and the Virgin. Occultists of the school of ELIPHAS LÉVI considered the Serpent as the "great magical agent" par excellence and did not much occupy themselves with the Virgin, who bears the principle of sacred Magic. They interested themselves above all in the psychic and mental aspect of the principle of electricity, called by them the "mobile astral agent", thus desiring to extend the domain of science — which is occupied only with the physical aspect of electricity — to the psychic and mental realms. They wanted to win over to science, i.e. for that understanding which makes use of the method of observation and experimentation, the whole domain of electricity — physical, psychical and mental.

Their dominant preoccupation was therefore to demonstrate that the tradition of ancient and medieval magic contains many a truth — due to observation and experimentation — ignored by science, and that the "great magical agent" can certainly be placed in the service of human intelligence and will just as is the energy of electricity and magnetism. The fact is that they enveloped their essential message in a cloud of verbal romanticism, evoking the mild shivers that accompany allusions to "secret initiations", to the "mysteries" of age-old secret fraternities of adepts who know and accomplish all that is worth the trouble of knowing and accomplishing, to mysterious communities of sages and mages who possess, across the ages, the knowledge and power for the occult government of the world, secretly fashioning the destiny of mankind. The fact of this romanticism — quite understandable and excuseable, moreover — does not at all prevent an understanding of the true task that they were pursuing in establishing

facts and in sifting out laws and principles from the totality of occult tradition and experiences. What they were doing in reality — disregarding the romanticism — was elaborating a modern science from the raw material of occult traditions and experiences.

May at long last the whisperers be silent — all those who spread rumors about the work of these occultists, placing them under suspicion of "satanism" and "dark practices"! They are no more — nor less — "satanists" than the people who, for example, treat mental patients with electric shocks, and they are without doubt innocent angels in comparison with the physicists who discovered nuclear energy and put it in the service of destruction!

It is time, once and for all, that an end is made to the foolish and unpleasant accusations — concerning contemporary doctors of occultism — of "satanism" or "black magic". They are, if the worst comes to the worst, romantics infatuated with the ideal of an absolute science of a glorious past, and they are, in so far as they are doing their best, pioneers of a science of the ignored or neglected domain of magic, i.e. a science of the dynamic relationships which exist between subjective consciousness and objective phenomena.

But, whilst wholly rejecting with indignation all the suspicions and accusations of "satanism" with regard to the classical authors of contemporary occultism, I regret nonetheless that they preferred Science to Hermeticism, and consequently dedicated their efforts, in preference, to the study of the principle of the Serpent, that of psychic and mental Electricity, instead of devoting themselves to the task of rendering themselves capable of participating consciously in the principle of the Virgin, that of psychic and mental Life. If they had chosen Hermeticism — i.e. the spiritual life which comprises the totality of mysticism, gnosis, magic and the perennial philosophy — they would have "written" collectively a modern Christian Zohar (or "Book of Splendor"), and they would have poured out into the world a flow of wisdom and spiritual life which would have been able to accomplish a true spiritual renaissance in the western world. Satis scientiae, sapientiae parum ("lots of knowledge, but too little wisdom") — this is what must be said to the representatives of occult science of our time. It is not the scholars and experimenters who are called to realize a spiritual springtime in the western world, but rather those participating in authentic sources of the profound life — the deeper life of thinking, feeling and the will. In order for this to take place, thought must become meditative, feeling-contemplative, and the will — ascetic. For in order to attain authentic sources of the profound life, one must seek profound thought — which is meditation; one must seek profound feeling — which is contemplation; and one must seek the primal will, beyond desires and longings — which is asceticism. It is thus that conscious participation in authentic spiritual life is gained, and it is thus that the sources of this life are opened.

The Virgin, the Force of our Arcanum, is the principle of springtime, i.e. that of creative spiritual élan and spiritual flourishing. The prodigious flourishing of philosophy and the arts in ancient Athens took place under the sign of the Virgin. Similarly, the flourishing of the Renaissance at Florence was under the vernal sign of the Virgin. Also, Weimar at the beginning of the XIXth century was a place where the breath of the Virgin perceptibly moved hearts and minds.

In ancient Egypt the domain of the mysteries of death was attributed to Osiris, and that of life — including language, writing, law and the arts — was attributed to Isis. Thus, Isis was the soul of the civilization of ancient Egypt, which we are still admiring after more than twenty centuries.

The sickness of the West today is that it is more and more lacking creative élan. The

Reformation, rationalism, the French revolution, materialistic faith of the XIXth century, and the Bolshevik revolution, show that everywhere mankind is turning away from the Virgin. The consequence of this is that the sources of creative spiritual élan are drying up, one after the other, and that an increasing aridity is showing up in all domains of the spiritual life of the West. It is said that the West is growing old. But why? Because it lacks creative élan, because it has turned away from the source of creative élan, because it has turned away from the Virgin. Without Virginity there is no springtime; there is neither freshness nor youth.

For this reason, it is regrettable that most of the authors and doctors of contemporary occultism also side with the "dethroners" of the Virgin. Thus, they turn towards "scientism", i.e. towards knowledge which unveils and undresses, and they turn away from wisdom, i.e. from knowledge which is veiled and dressed with symbols, which is due not to scrutinizing observation but rather to revelatory worship. For there is a world of difference between a scientific scrutinizer of the "naked truth" and a worshipper of the truth which is revealed through symbols. The former is inevitably an iconoclast; the latter is an iconodule. The former seeks nudity; the latter prepares himself for revelation through the fullness of symbolism.

Now, the Hermeticist is essentially an iconophile. For him symbols are not obstacles that must be eliminated in order to arrive at knowledge of the truth, but rather means for receiving revelation. The "clothes" — the symbols — of truth are for him not what hides it, but rather what reveals it. The entire world, in so far as it is a series of symbols, does not hide, but reveals the Word. The divine commandment: Thou shalt not kill, is also applicable to the domain of knowledge. He who denies the life of symbols, kills them in his thought. For to deny that which reveals means to kill that which lives in the domain of thought. The iconoclast is an intellectual murderer. The Hermeticist is, in contrast, an iconophile and traditionalist. This means to say that he does not side with the successive waves of iconoclasm — the waves named "reformation", "enlightenment", "scientific faith" — which set fire to forests of symbols protecting the intellectual sun of humanity against barrenness and erosion. This means to say, also, that he has as a basic principle not only the Commandment: Thou shalt not kill, but also the commandment which is the foundation of all tradition — i.e. all continuity in progress, growth, development and evolution — the Commandment: Honor thy Father and thy Mother.

To honor father and mother is the spirit and soul of tradition, of constructive continuation from the past to the present, of true progress across the ages of the path of the life of mankind towards truth. It is still more — it is the very essence of the life of the spirit and the soul. Because it is the experience of honored paternal love which renders us capable of raising our gaze to heaven and saying with sincerity and authenticity: Pater noster qui es in coelis ("Our Father who art in heaven"). And it is the experience of honored maternal love which underlies our prayer: Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis ("Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us").

The source of spiritual life is in this experience of the two aspects of love: the virile love which provides for and directs our steps towards what is good for us, and the tender love which assuages all our tears. Now, when care and tenderness manifest themselves amongst human beings on earth, it is unthinkable that this unparalleled treasure is not also to be found at the very depths of the world from which mankind has arisen. Here is the foundation of natural religion in human consciousness — and therefore of all confidence in divine order, all worship of the invisible, and all aspiration towards the invisible. And this aspiration proves to be well founded — the Invisible is in fact neither deaf nor mute. This latter fact is the

foundation of supernatural religion in the experience of human consciousness which experiences the action of Grace and Revelation from above. Grace and Revelation are the manifestation of paternal love from above, just as it is said in the Sermon on the Mount: "What man of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven, give good things to those who ask him!" — (Matthew vii, 9-11)

Hermeticism, in so far as it is a living tradition — for more than thirty centuries — owes its life to the Commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother". For this commandment brings longevity with it — as, moreover, is said in the text: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the LORD God gives thee" (Exodus xx, 12). It is in honoring the transcendent God ("Our Father who is in heaven") and the Soul of non-fallen Nature ("the Virgin Mother") that Hermeticism — in spite of numerous temporary aberrations on the part of its representatives who at one time have given themselves up to pagan "philosophism", at another time to "cabbalism" without Christ, or to "alchemism" in order to make material gold, or, lastly, to modern "scientism" — has survived Egyptian decadence, Greco-Roman pagan decadence, the organized "theologism" of the Middle Ages, the iconoclasm of the Reformation, the rationalism of the Enlightenment and, lastly, the "scientism" of the XIXth century. Even though Hermeticism has every reason to regret, to repent, to expiate and make good a lot of its past, in this it is no exception, as all man's spiritual traditions have sinned a lot. Its longevity, however, is due to the fact that, fundamentally, it has honored its celestial and terrestrial parents. It is not true — as its adversaries would have it — that its longevity is due to the persistence in human nature of the vices of morbid curiosity and arrogant presumption, which latter refuses to bow before a mystery. No, Hermeticism lives and survives from century to century thanks to its essential faithfulness to the divine commandments "Thou shalt not kill" and "Honor thy father and thy mother".

As a Hermeticist, I honor all the spiritual "fathers and mothers" of earthly mankind's past who have contributed to its spiritual life, including all the ancient sages, the patriarchs, Moses, the prophets, Greek philosophers, Cabbalists, apostles and saints, the masters of the Scholastic School, Christian mystics, and many others besides. Is this, therefore, syncretism? No, but thanks should be accorded to those to whom it is due. To deny is to kill; to forget is to bury. To honor and appreciate is to preserve living; to restore to memory is to recall to life. In honoring much, Hermeticism participates in the life of much; therefore it has much life. It is to this that Hermeticism owes its longevity.

In writing all these things, I am concerned all the time with the subject of Force, the eleventh Arcanum of the Tarot. For Force is Life, and longevity is an important aspect of it. The Virgin is not only the source of creative élan, but also of spiritual longevity. This is why the West, in turning away more and more from the Virgin, is growing old, i.e. it is distancing itself from the rejuvenating source of longevity. Each revolution which has taken place in the West — that of the Reformation, the French revolution, the scientific revolution, the delirium of nationalism, the communist revolution — has advanced the process of aging in the West, because each has signified a further distancing from the principle of the Virgin. In other words, Our Lady is Our Lady, and is not to be replaced with impunity either by the "goddess Reason", or by the "goddess biological Evolution", or by the "goddess Economy".

The adulation of all these "goddesses" bears witness to the unfaithfulness of so-called "Christian" mankind; it very much resembles the sort of spiritual adultery which the

Biblical prophets gave so much utterance to. It is, still more, a sin against one of the Commandments of faithfulness to the principle of non-fallen Nature, the Virgin Mother, namely the Commandment: Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Every living spiritual tradition ought to be faithful to its original impulse, to the essence and substance of the cause that it espouses, and to the ideal aim that it pursues. In other words, it will preserve its identity only by remaining faithful to its effective cause, to its formal and material causes, and to its final cause. The four modes of causality of the traditional school of logic — causa efficiens, causa formalis, causa materialis and causa finalis — also constitute the logic of causality for all living spiritual tradition. For every spiritual tradition has its original impulse, its principle and its method, as well as its ideal. It is always the Tetragrammaton YOD - HE - VAV - HE which underlies the reality of life as well as logical causality. The effective cause, the original impulse, is the YOD of the Tetragrammaton; the formal cause is the first HÉ; the material cause is the VAV; and the final cause is the second HÉ. Source, law, method and aim constitute the "Tetragrammaton" of every living spiritual tradition.

A spiritual tradition of universal significance — whose effective cause was God, whose formal cause was the Law, whose material cause was the community of Israel (or the Shekinah) and whose final cause was the Christ — was founded, or rather engendered, in the desert at Mt. Sinai. This tradition was an alliance in the manner of a marriage. And the conditions of durability of this tradition — or alliance, or marriage — are found expounded in the ten Commandments received on Mount Sinai. Their totality is, so to say, a "portrait" of the Virgin, the Shekinah, i.e. non-Fallen Nature or divine Force. The Cabbalists of the Zohar certainly understood this, namely that the soul of the Torah (the Law) is the Virgin-Mother.

> " The Torah is situated between two houses, one recondite and on high, and the other more accessible. The one on high is the "Great Voice" referred to in the verse, "a great voice which did not cease" (Deut. v, 22). This voice is in the recesses and is not heard or revealed, and when it issues from the throat it utters the aspirate without sound and it flows on without ceasing, though it is so tenuous as to be inaudible. From this issues the Torah, which is the voice of Jacob. The audible voice issues from the inaudible. In due course speech is attached to it, and through the force of that speech it emerges into the open. The voice of Jacob, which is the Torah, is thus attached to two females, to this inner voice which is inaudible, and to this outer voice which is heard. Strictly speaking there are two which are inaudible and two which are heard. The two which are not heard are, first, the supernal Wisdom which is located in the Thought and is not disclosed or heard; and secondly the same Wisdom when it issues and discloses itself a little in a whisper which cannot be heard, being then called the "Great Voice", which is very tenuous and issues in a whisper. The two which are heard are those which issue from this source — the voice of Jacob and the articulation which accompanies it. This "Great Voice" which cannot be heard is a "house" ("beth" — in Hebrew) to the supernal Wisdom (the female is always called "house"), and the articulation we have mentioned is a "house" to the Voice of Jacob, which is the Torah, and therefore the Torah commences with the letter BETH, which is, as it were, a "house" to it." (Zohar, Bereshith, 50b; trsl. H. Sperling and M. Simon, 5 vols., London-Bournemouth, 1949 vol. i, pp. 160-161)

Now, the written Law is the "house" of the oral Law, and the oral Law is the "house" of the Voice which whispers, which, in its turn, is the "house" of the silent Voice which is

Thought or the "house" of transcendent Wisdom.

It is in this sense that the ten Commandments "whisper" their message of the integral being of the Virgin, who was the instrument of realization of the aim of the Sinai alliance — the Incarnation of the Word. The ten Commandments represent the formal cause (the principles, or the Law) of realization of the final cause (the Incarnation of the Word) of the tradition founded at Mount Sinai. At the same time, they suggest, by way of whispering, the Virgin, who is the material cause of this realization.

Here, therefore, is the "Tetragrammaton" of the tradition inaugurated by the patriarchs and founded anew by Moses: the revelation of God through words and deeds — this is its Y O D, its effective cause; the revealed Law — this is its first H É, its formal cause; the Virgin present in the Law and in the community of Israel as its Force-Life — this is its V A V, its material cause; the Messiah, lastly, whose birth is the final cause of the tradition-alliance-marriage of Israel — this is the second H É.

The spiritual tradition of Israel being of universal significance, every particular spiritual tradition falls under the law of its origin, life and work. In other words, no spiritual tradition can live or accomplish its mission in the world without conforming to the essential conditions of the origin, life and mission of the tradition of Israel. In other words again, there are no true traditions other than those modelled on the tradition of Israel. For it is the spiritual tradition par excellence — the model, the prototype and the law of all viable spiritual traditions which have missions to accomplish.

The following are the essential conditions to which every viable spiritual tradition must adhere:-

It must be founded from above; it must observe the ten Commandments and be inspired by the ideal of Virginity; and its aim must be implied in the will which founded it, with every human "program" withdrawn from it.

It must be founded from above.

This means to say, in the first place, that the original impulse of a viable spiritual tradition must be given either by explicit revelation or by direct action from above acting with moral irresistibility. It is in this way that the living traditions represented by the Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan, Jesuit, and also other orders, were founded. An explicit revelation or an irresistable vocation was the source of their origin. Thus the Benedictine order still flourishes after fifteen centuries, Dominican and Franciscan orders after seven centuries, and the Jesuit order after four centuries. Even though it would be easy to draw up a long list of their imperfections and their sins, these orders nonetheless furnish examples of a remarkable longevity. And what they have in common is above all the fact that the origin of the initiative of their foundation was from above.

It must observe the ten Commandments and be inspired by the ideal of Virginity.

The ten commandments signify much more than simply a moral code of daily life. They signify, further, the hygiene, the method and the conditions of fructification of the spiritual life, including all forms and degrees of practical esotericism. In this sense, they may be formulated as follows (cf. Exodus xx, 1-17):

i surrender to the living God ("thou shalt have no other gods before me");
ii non-substitution of products of the human mind, or those of Nature, for the reality of the living God ("thou shalt not make for thyself a graven image, or any likeness");
iii activity in the name of God without making use of his name in order to adorn oneself with it ("thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain");
iv practice of meditation ("remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy");

v continuity of effort and experience ("honor thy father and thy mother");
vi constructive attitude ("thou shalt not kill");
vii faithfulness to the alliance ("thou shalt not commit adultery");
viii renunciation of the desire to accept merit which is neither the fruit of one's own work nor the gift of grace ("thou shalt not steal");
ix renunciation of an accusatory role towards others ("thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor");
x respectful consideration for the private and personal life of others ("thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house").

These constitute the ten foundations not only for a healthy moral life but also for all mystical, gnostic, magical and Hermetic practice.

In fact, mysticism is the awakening of the soul to the reality of the presence of God. This awakening is possible only towards the living God, only towards the divine Person, whereas pantheism offers only the perspective of letting oneself be lulled by the undulation of the ocean of deified Nature, and atheism offers only nothingness. Gnosis is what reflected consciousness apprehends of mystical experience and revelation from above. The fundamental law of gnosis is not to substitute imagery drawn from the human mind, or from Nature, for divine intuition. Magic is the bringing into play of that which consciousness has received from mysticism and gnosis. Now, the fundamental law of sacred magic is to act in and through the name of the Divine, whilst guarding against making the name of the Divine an instrument of one's own will. Hermeticism is the life of thought <u>within</u> the whole organism of mysticism, gnosis and magic. Its fundamental law is meditation, i.e. the practice of "remembering the sabbath day, to keep it holy". Meditation is "sanctified rest", where thought is turned towards that which is above.

This, then, is the role of the first four Commandments in spiritual practice.

The other six Commandments state the fundamental laws of spiritual culture or discipline serving as a basis for the spiritual practice to which the first four commandments relate.

In truth, in order to advance one has to learn. In order to learn, one has to appreciate the experience of the past and one has to <u>continue</u> it. All progress presupposes continuity — coherence between the past, present and future. This is stated by the fifth Commandment: <u>Honor thy father and thy mother</u>. There only is real progress within a living <u>tradition</u>. For life — spiritual as well as biological — is always tradition, i.e. continuity. Therefore, one has to abstain from all action that breaks continuity, cutting the current of life. It is the fundamental law of a <u>constructive</u> attitude, which is essential in spiritual life, that is stated by the sixth Commandment: <u>Thou shalt not kill</u>. Continuity — or tradition and life — implies faithfulness to the cause that is espoused, to the direction taken, to the ideal that one has as a guide, and to all alliances with entities above and with human beings below, for the sake of the continuity of life. This is what is stated by the seventh Commandment: <u>Thou shalt not commit adultery</u>. There is carnal adultery, psychic adultery and spiritual adultery. The Biblical prophets spoke of this in relation to the unfaithfulness to the alliance of Sinai on the part of the kings and people of Israel, who on many occasions gave themselves up to cults of Canaanite divinities. This is today also the case when one embraces, for example, the Vedanta or Buddhism, whilst having been baptized and sufficiently instructed in order to have access — given good will — to experience of the sublime Christian mysteries. I am speaking neither about the <u>study</u> nor the adoption of the <u>technical methods</u> of Yoga, Vedanta or Buddhism, but only about the case where one changes <u>faith</u>, i.e. where one substitutes the ideal of liberation for that of love, an impersonal God for

the personal God, return to the state of potentiality (or Nirvana) for the Kingdom of God, a wise instructor for the Savior, and so on. However, there is no element of spiritual adultery in the case of J. M. DÉCHANET, for example; he is the author of "La Voie du Silence" (trsl. R. X. Hindmarsh, "Christian Yoga", London, 1960), who adapted the technical methods of Yoga to Christian spiritual practice. For nothing is more natural and legitimate than to learn and make use of of the benefits of experiences accumulated in the East or West. If western medicine saves the lives of millions in the East, why should not oriental yoga help millions in the West, those engaged in spiritual practice, to attain the equilibrium and psycho-physical health that the technical methods of Yoga render possible in such an effective way? Exchange of the fruits of experience between the various cultural realms of mankind is simply an expression of the fact of human brotherhood. It expresses reciprocal help between members of a single family, and has nothing in common with spiritual adultery, i.e. with unfaithfulness to the spiritual alliance or faith to which one belongs or to which one is called to belong.

All the fruits of human experience merit being studied or examined — and, according to their merit, accepted or rejected. But experience is one thing and faith, or metaphysical ideal, is another. With the latter what is at stake are the moral values that one cannot change without either essential ruin or gain in the life of soul and spirit. One cannot change faith without gaining or losing. A Negro fetishist who embraces Islam gains; a Christian who is converted to Islam loses. The former gains new moral values for his soul; the latter loses moral values from his soul. Regrettable or not, it is a fact that religions constitute a scale of moral and spiritual values. They are not equal — being stages of mankind's evolution over millenia, on the one hand, and successive revelations from above, on the other hand. There is therefore no religion without value, or that is even intrinsically false or "diabolical"; but, on the other hand, there is no religion of higher value than that of love.

Spiritual adultery is therefore the exchange of a higher moral and spiritual value for a lower moral and spiritual value. It is, for example, the exchange of: the living God for an impersonal divinity; Christ crucified and resurrected for a sage deep in meditation, the Holy Virgin-Mother for Nature in evolution; the community of Saints, Apostles, Martyrs, Monks, Confessors, Church Doctors, and Virgins for a "community of geniuses" of Philosophy, Art, Science, etc.

We have said that all the fruits of human experience merit being studied and examined — and, according to their merit, accepted or rejected. In speaking of spiritual experience, there are certainly fruits of experience that must be rejected. These are those that are due to theft, i.e. where there is the desire to obtain without effort or sacrifice results whose worth implies effort and sacrifice. Thus, GURDJIEFF, the master of P. D. OUSPENSKY (the author of "Tertium Organum"), taught that there are three ways of coming out of the confinement of ordinary experience and consciousness — the way of the yogi, the way of the monk and that of the "artful man" ("put' khitrogo cheloviека" in Russian). What the yogi and the monk achieve after long endeavors of discipline and sacrifice, the "artful man" ("khitryi cheloviek") can achieve without effort, without sacrifice, and almost immediately, by taking... a pill containing quite assorted elements.

There are indeed people who seek transcendental experience by means of the cactus peyote (Echinocactus Williamsii, or Anhalonium Williamsii, or even Lophophora Williamsii Lemaire), whose usage towards the end of evoking visions was widespread amongst tribes of

Red Indians from Mexico to Canada, which led to the foundation of a "Native American Church", an indigenous American church (cf. Oliver LA FARGE, "A Pictorial History of the American Indian", London, 1962). What is understandable and quite excusable with respect to American Indians — seeing their desperate situation — is not so with respect to people of European origin, the heirs of the Christian civilization of the West. Those seeking transcendental experience by such means evidently want to dispense with the costs of the way of regular spiritual development, in order to obtain cheaply what others obtain only after much effort and sacrifice.

The Commandment: Thou shalt not steal is still of fundamental importance for the spiritual life. Every school of authentic spirituality owes its continuation to the commandment which preserves its authenticity and which, for the spiritual domain, comes down to a fundamental rule of agricultural labor: you will harvest only after having tilled the earth, only after having sown, and only after having waited for the time when the fruit will be ripe for harvesting. All "tricks" of a technical nature, having as their aim the dispensing with the effort and sacrifice required for normal spiritual growth and development, thus fall under the heading of sinning against the eighth Commandment.

There still remain two Commandments as indispensable for the spiritual life as the eight Commandments already discussed: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor, and Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

These two Commandments relate to the spirit of rivalry, which manifests itself either as negative criticism or as envy. This means to say that every spiritual movement, every spiritual tradition, every school of spirituality, and every disciple or so-called "master" of a school of spiritual life, should in no way be motivated by a spirit of rivalry, but rather by love for the cause and ideal.

Thus St. Teresa of AVILA, enamored by the cause and ideal of a life entirely devoted to God, accomplished a profound reform of the Carmelite order without destroying the unity of the Church, and without accusing or condemning anyone. At the same time the Augustinian monk Martin LUTHER, given up to the spirit of criticism, thought out a reform of the whole Church and, carried away by the desire to do better, founded a rival church, whilst declaring Rome as "the seat of the Antichrist" and its faithful either as "poor strays" or as "wolves in sheep's clothing". Therefore St. Teresa, St. John of the CROSS, St. Peter of ALCANTARA, St. Julian of AVILA and other contemporaries of the same spiritual stature would, according to Luther, be "strays" or "ravishing wolves in sheep's clothing", i.e. either deceived or deceivers. Here is a clear case of "bearing false witness against thy neighbor" due to the spirit of criticism and rivalry. Anyone who takes on himself the mission of judge can act only in the sense of destruction. Anyone who begins to criticize before long passes to censure and sooner or later ends up by condemning, which leads inevitably to division into hostile camps and to other forms of destruction.

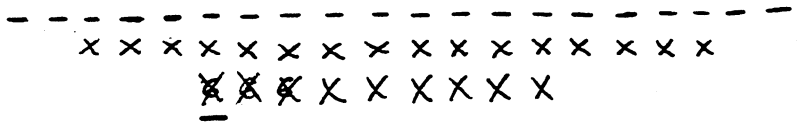
Criticism and polemicism are mortal enemies of the spiritual life. For they signify the substitution of destructive electrical energy for constructive vital force. A complete change of the inspiring and motivating source takes place when a person or spiritual movement becomes engaged in the way of rivalry — with the criticism and polemicism that it comprises. Once carried away by electricity, "bearing witness against thy neighbor" will always be essentially and intrinsically false.

Now, there is no authentic spirituality which owes its origin and existence to opposition or rivalry. "To be against something" is sterile and is never capable of engendering a viable tradition or giving birth to a school of spiritual life, whilst "to be for something" is fertile and is an indispensable condition for all constructive activity. This includes every tradition or viable school of spirituality.

The spirit underlying "bearing false witness against thy neighbor" and "coveting thy neighbor's house" is spiritually sterile and destructive. Particular spiritual schools and traditions should not, in order to live, be rivals, but should live in consciousness of the kinship of their cause and ideals, if there is kinship; or, if there is not, they should respect the domain of freedom of the other — the "house" proper to it — without mixing this with envy or criticism. If there is no cooperation resulting from kinship of causes and ideals, then spiritual traditions and schools should live and let live in peace!

Be that as it may, the totality of the ten Commandments constitutes the law of life, progress and fertility for spiritual traditions and schools, just as it is that of the life, progress and fertility of each individual engaged on a path of spiritual practice. For the ten Commandments, their comprehension and their practice, signify harmony with non-fallen Nature, with the principle of virginity, with the Virgin or the Force of the eleventh Arcanum of the Tarot.

Haec est totius fortitudinis
fortitudo fortis :
quia vincet omnem rem subtilem,
omnemque solidam penetrabit.



Letter XII : Meditation on the twelfth Major Arcanum of the Tarot - "The Hanged Man" - "Le Pendu" ----

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God... Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God...

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit. (John iii, 3, 5, 8)

Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head. (Matthew viii, 20)

Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Matthew xiii, 43)

"That which I had to say about the operation of Sol (Soleil) is completed."
(Emerald Table of Hermes)

Dear Unknown Friend,

Here before us is the Card of the twelfth Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Hanged Man". It represents a young man suspended by one foot between two trees, with branches cut close to the trunk, from a transversal beam that they support, thus forming a porch.

The position of the man — upside down, head below, hanging by one foot in a porch, with his free leg folded back at the knee and his arms bound behind his back — at first naturally evokes ideas of gravitation and of the torture that conflict with it can inflict on man. Therefore, our first impression of the Card plunges us into the heart of the problem of the relationship between man and gravitation, and the conflicts that this relationship entails.

Gravitation — physical, psychic and spiritual — occupies a central place as a regulating factor in the solar system, in the system of the atom, in the biological cell, in the biological organism, in the mechanism of memory and the association of ideas, in the relationship of the sexes, in the social organism, in the formation of communities according to way of life, doctrine and ideal, and, lastly, in the process of biological, psychic and spiritual evolution, where a center of gravity — or universal prototype as the final cause — is at work across the ages, just as the sun, in so far as it is the center of gravity of the planetary system, operates across space. The whole world manifests itself to us as a comprehensive system of gravitation constituting a number of particular gravitational systems — such as atoms, cells, organisms, planets, individuals, communities and hierarchies. Each one of us is placed in the cosmic gravitational system which determines our freedom, i.e. what we are able and not able to do. The domain of our freedom itself, our spiritual life, shows the real and active presence of gravitation of a spiritual order. For what is the phenomenon of religion if not the manifestation of spiritual gravitation towards God, i.e. towards the center of spiritual gravitation of the world? It is significant that the term "the

Fall" — chosen for the primordial event which brought about the change of man's state from that named "paradise" to the terrestrial state of toil, suffering and death — is borrowed from the domain of gravitation. In fact, there is nothing against the conception of the Fall of Adam as the passage from a spiritual gravitational system, whose center is God, to a terrestrial gravitational system, whose center is the Serpent (that we have characterized in the preceding Letter as the "principle of electricity"). The Fall, as a phenomenon, can certainly be understood as the passage from the one gravitational field to the other.

Now, the domain of Freedom — the spiritual life — is found placed between two gravitational fields with two different centers. The Gospel designates them as "Heaven" and "this World", or as the "Kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of the Prince of this world". And it designates those whose will follows or is submitted to the gravitation of "this World" as "children of this world", and those whose will follows the gravitation of "Heaven" as the "children (or sons) of light".

The Manichaeans straight away drew the conclusion from this that the invisible world, or Heaven, is Good and the visible world of Nature is Bad, wholly forgetting the fact that Evil is of spiritual origin, and is therefore invisible, and that Good is impressed into created Nature, and is therefore also visible. Although the two gravitational fields are interpenetrating and one could not, or should not, identify them simply with visible Nature and the invisible spiritual world, they are nevertheless certainly real and morally quite discernible. For just as there is a "discernment of spirits", which the apostle Paul speaks of, so there is a discernment of the phenomena of Nature which manifests, for example, in medical diagnosis, in the choice of remedies from the kingdoms of Nature, in the domain of physical and psychic hygiene, etc.

The human being participates in these two gravitational fields, as the Apostle PAUL had in mind when he said:

> "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." (Galatians v, 17)

These "opposing desires" are the tendencies through which the two gravitational fields manifest themselves. The man who lives in the grip of gravitation of "this world" at the expense of the gravitation of "heaven" is the "carnal man"; he who lives in equilibrium between the two gravitational fields is the "psychic man"; and, lastly, the one who lives under the sway of the gravitation of "heaven" is the "spiritual man".

It is this latter who constitutes the subject of the XIIth Arcanum of the Tarot, for it is an upside-down man that Card XII represents. The Hanged Man represents the condition of one in the life of whom gravitation from above has replaced that from below.

Firstly, it should be said that attraction from above is as real as that from below, and that the condition of a human being who has passed, whilst living, from the field of terrestrial gravitation into that of heaven is indeed comparable to that of the Hanged Man of the Card. This is at one and the same time a benefaction and a martyrdom; both are very real.

The history of the human race bears witness to the reality of attraction from above. The exodus into Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrian and other deserts inaugurated by St. PAUL of Thebes and St. ANTHONY the Great were nothing other than the manifestation of irresistable attraction from above. The Desert Fathers, pioneers of this exodus, had no program or plan to found any

communities or schools of Christian spirituality comparable to the schools of yoga in India. No, what happened to them was the irresistible appeal from above to solitude and a life given up entirely to spiritual reality. Thus, St. Anthony the Great said:

"As fish who remain on dry land die, so do monks who linger outside of the cell, or who pass time with people of the world, slacken the tension of solitude. Therefore it is necessary — as fish do to the sea — that we return to the cell, so as not to forget, through dallying outside, our interior vigil." (St. Anthony the Great, Apophthegmata, x)

The "tension of solitude" — here, therefore, is the element proper to souls under the sway of attraction from above. It was "as fish seeking the sea" that they sought solitude where they found the "tension", i.e. the relationship between the gravitation of Heaven and that of Earth, which was as right for them as water is for fish. It was in solitude that they could <u>live</u>, i.e. develop spiritual temperature, breathe spiritual air, quench their spiritual thirst and satisfy their spiritual hunger. Outside of the solitude and tension that the "interior vigil" meant to them, the Desert Fathers felt cold, were unable to breathe, and suffered spiritual thirst and hunger.

This, therefore, is something really quite different from programs and plans: the reality of the attraction of heaven at work in the lives of the Desert Fathers.

They were pioneers. Before long, still during their lifetime, the deserts of Thebais, Neutra and Ceuta were peopled with anchorites. Then, in Upper Egypt, St. PACHOMIUS founded cenobites, the prototypes of the monasteries that we know, where several hermits lived together under a superior or abbott. This form of life was, much later, adapted and perfected by St. BASIL in the East, and by St. AUGUSTINE, St. CASSIAN and St. BENEDICT in the West.

Although all this immense subsequent development was present in germ in the solitary lives of St. PAUL of Thebes and St. ANTHONY the Great, this was not at all the conscious motive for their retreat into the desert. This motive was solely the desire for solitude caused by the irresistible attraction of heaven.

The attraction of heaven is so real that it can take hold of not only the soul but also the physical body. Then the body is carried up and no longer touches the ground.

The following is what St. TERESA of Avila, who had this experience, wrote in her "Life" (her autobiography):—

"Then the cloud rises to heaven taking the soul with it, and begins to show it the features of the kingdom He has prepared for it. I do not know whether this is an accurate comparison, but in point of fact that is how it happens. In these raptures, the soul no longer seems to animate the body; its natural heat therefore is felt to diminish and it gradually gets cold, though with a feeling of very great joy and sweetness. Here there is no possibility of resisting... rapture is, as a rule, irresistible. Before you can be warned by a thought or help yourself in any way, it comes as a quick and violent shock; you see and feel this cloud, or this powerful eagle rising and bearing you up on its wings.

You realize, I repeat, and indeed see that you are being carried away you know not where... We have to go willingly wherever we are carried, for in fact, we are being borne off whether we like it or not.

In this emergency very often I should like to resist, and I exert all my strength to do so, especially at such times as I am in a public place, and very often when I am in private also, because I am afraid of delusions. Sometimes with a great struggle I have been able to do something against it. But it has been like fighting a great giant, and has left me utterly exhausted. At other times resistance has

been impossible; my soul has been carried away, and usually my head as well, without my being able to prevent it; and sometimes it has affected my whole body, which has been lifted from the ground...

It seemed to me when I tried to resist that a great force, for which I can find no comparison, was lifting me up from beneath my feet. It came with greater violence than any other spiritual experience...

I confess that in me it aroused a great fear, at first a very great fear. One sees one's body being lifted from the ground; and though the soul draws it up after itself, and does so most gently if it does not resist, one does not lose consciousness. At least I myself was sufficiently aware to realize that I was being lifted..." ("The Life of St. Teresa of Avila, chapter XX, trsl. J.M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp. 136-138)

This is a simple and veracious testimony of the reality of the irresistible attraction from above and of the passage from the field of terrestrial gravitation to the field of celestial gravitation.

St. Teresa had the experience where the body was "drawn up after the soul" which was, in its turn, under the sway of attraction emanating from the Center of spiritual attraction which was, for her, the Lord.

But when the Center of spiritual attraction, when the Lord himself, is clothed in a body — which was the case in the earthly life of Jesus-Christ — what happens then? There is then no question of being carried off in a rapture, because to what place could the Humanity of the Lord be carried off — the "rapturing" and "carrying off" principle, the center of spiritual gravitation, being in itself?

Now, the Gospel clarifies this point for us. It says:-

"When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea rose because a strong wind was blowing.

When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near to the boat. They were frightened, but he said to them: 'I t i s I (J e s u i s); do not be afraid!' " (John vi, 16-20)

"And Peter answered him: Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water. He said: Come! So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out: Lord, save me! Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him: O man of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew xiv, 28-31)

The key to the answer is found above all in the words: "I t i s I, do not be afraid!" The accepted translation of "e g o e i m i, me phobeisthe" in Greek, or "E g o s u m, nolite timere" in Latin, is: "It is I (C'est moi); do not be afraid!" This is right and there is nothing to be said against it — "ego eimi" and "ego sum" mean literally "I am", but in the given context signify "It is I". The context bears this out. This is why the translation "It is I" is not only justified, but also — in view of the context — necessary. It is however legitimate, without questioning the rightness of the accepted translation, to understand the words "ego eimi" (Ego sum) more literally, and, at the same time, more profoundly. For two questions are implied in the fear and confusion of the disciples. "Who is the one who we see walking on the water?" and "How is he able to walk on the water?"

Now, "It is I" is the answer to the first question, and "I am" is the answer to the second. For "I am" reveals an esoteric truth (i.e. profound and not immediately obvious), whilst "It is I" is an exoteric or factual answer. It hides and contains, as its kernel, the esoteric answer.

What is, therefore, the esoteric truth that the words, "I am, do not be afraid!" reveal?

"I am" is the formula of revelation in the world of the existence of the divine essence of Jesus Christ. The whole Gospel is the history of this gradual revelation, the stages of which it summarizes through the diverse aspects of the comprehensive "I am", such as "I am the true vine", "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life", "I am the door", "I am the bread of life", "I am the good shepherd", "I am the light of the world" and "I am the resurrection and the life".

Now, the words "I am; do not be afraid!" spoken by the one walking on the water amount to the statement: "I am gravitation, and he who holds to me will never sink or be engulfed". Because fear is due to the menace of being engulfed by elemental forces of gravitation of a lower order, i.e. of being carried away by the play of blind forces from the agitated "sea" of the "electrical field" of death. "I am; do not be afraid!" is therefore the message of the Center, or Master, of celestial gravitation, demonstrated by the action of support with regard to Peter, who was saved from sinking. Thus, there is another field of gravitation than that of death, and he who unites himself with it can walk on water, i.e. transcend the agitated element of "this world", the electrical gravitational field of the Serpent. This message contains not only the invitation to have recourse to the "kingdom of heaven", but also the solemn declaration of the immortality of the soul, in so far as the soul is capable of transcending the engulfing gravitation and "walking on the water".

Peter, who "got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus", experienced the same elevating rapture that St. Teresa describes. He got out of the boat, which means — in view of all the laws of reason and memory — that he was taken out of the domain of ordinary consciousness, i.e. that of reason, memory and sense perception, and he walked on the water, drawn by Jesus. He experienced, therefore, the same elevation of the soul which draws the body up after it as spoken of by St. Teresa. He even experienced the same fear which St. Teresa confessed took hold of her in seeing "one's body being lifted from the ground". And just as she was drawn by a Hand extended from above, so did Peter have the experience of help from the same Hand.

Now, St. Teresa and St. Peter — the one and the other — had the same experience of psycho-somatic ecstasy (as, moreover, many other saints have had). But the question which occupies us is that of the state of Jesus-Christ himself, walking on the water. Was it an ecstasy for him also?

No. And this is why: ecstasy is the going out of the soul from the domain of the powers of discursive reason, memory and imagination — sometimes followed by the body. Both Peter and St. Teresa passed in their rapture through the stages: "You are"; "I draw near to You"; "It is not I, but You who lives and acts in me". It is therefore the attraction of the divine You, resulting in in union with him, which constitutes the essence of their psycho-somatic ecstasy, whilst Jesus-Christ walked on the water not by virtue of ecstasy — not by going out of his Humanity — but rather by virtue of e n s t a s y, i.e. centering in himself, which is the active virtue of the formula "I am; do not be afraid!". The Humanity of Jesus-Christ walking on the water did not lead to a You attracting and supporting it, but rather to the divine I of the Son of the eternal Father present in itself.

"Ego sum; nolite timere" — means to say therefore: I am gravitation; just as the sun in the

visible world bears itself and attracts the planets, so am I the true sun of the invisible world who bears himself and attracts and supports other beings." Do not be afraid, for I am ".

Yet Jesus-Christ walking on the water reveals still another mystery than that of the Sun of the spiritual world, the center of celestial gravitation. For not only did he stand on the water — which would suffice to reveal and demonstrate this truth — but he also walked on the water, i.e. he moved in a quite definite direction in the horizontal sense. He walked towards the boat in which his disciples rowed. There, in his walking towards the boat, is already contained in germ — essentially revealing it — his whole work, temporal and eternal, i.e. his sacrifice, his resurrection, and all that is implied in his promise: "Lo, I am with you always, until the end of the world" (Matthew xxviii, 20).

The boat with his disciples is, therefore, and will be until the end of the world, the aim of the I am walking on the water. His enstasy, his profound centering in himself, does not distance him from the navigators on the agitated sea of history and evolution, and does not make him disappear into the other sea — the calm sea of Nirvana — but rather, on the contrary, it entails that he walks, until the end of the world, after the boat with his disciples.

The hermits of the desert, the psycho-somatic ecstasy of St. Teresa and St. Peter, Jesus-Christ walking on the water — the totality of these facts should bring to the light of our minds the spiritual and manifest reality of celestial gravitation. At least, it is to this end that we have dwelt upon these things.

It is necessary, nevertheless, to add here a consideration of facts which appear to belong to the sphere of celestial gravitation but which are, in reality, of a contrary nature. The facts that I have in mind are those of "levitation", i.e. instances of elevation of the body from the ground, which one could be tempted to regard as being of the same nature as the psycho-somatic raptures of St. Teresa and St. Peter, or even as the walking of Jesus-Christ on the water.

Thus, legend attributes to SIMON Magus that he could elevate himself physically in the air. Cases of the elevation of spiritualist mediums are also known in our time.

It is characteristic that even Gerard van RIJNBERK, who truly ought to have known better, did not distinguish the levitation of mediums from that which accompanies the rapture of saints. This is what he says concerning the "levitation of mediums":-

> "The phenomenon of levitation has been affirmed for several holy personages of the Hindu, Buddhist and Christian religions. They raised themselves in the air several feet and hovered for some time without any means of support. This fact has been established for a number of Saints of the Catholic Church.* I restrict myself to naming the

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*In fact, one finds the following cases of levitation cited in Joseph von GÖRRES, "Die Christliche Mystik" (5 vols.; Regensburg, 1836-1842): St. Ambrosius Sensedonio (i, p.324); St. Philip of Néri (ii, p.9); St. Teresa of Avila (ii, p.122); St. Thomas Aquinas (ii, p.208); St. Savior of Horta (ii, p.214); St. Thomas of Villanova (ii, p.253); St. Catherine of Sienna (ii, p.426); Joan of Carniola (ii, pp.493-494); St. Mary of Agréda (ii, p.520); St. Peter of Alcantara (ii, pp.523, 529); Christine the Admirable (ii, p.535); Adelaide of Adelhausen (ii, p.536); Esperance of Brenegalla and Agnes of Bohemia (ii, p.537); St. Colette, Dalmatius of Gerona, Anthony of St. Reine, St. Francis of Assisi, Bernard of Courléon and St. Joseph of Copertino (ii, p.539); Joan Rodriguez (ii, p.548); St. Dominique of Jesus-Maria, the Blessed Gerardesca of Pisa and Elizabeth of Falkenstein (ii, p. 549); Damian of Vicari, Agnes of Chatillon, Michael Lazar and Peter of Regolada (ii, pp. 551-552).

Great Teresa (XVIth century), her contemporary John of the CROSS, Peter of Alcantara, also of the same period, then a little later Joseph of COPERTINO (1603-1623), who was seen flying through the air several times... This phenomenon has been related also of several mediums, but unfortunately almost without exception this has taken place in complete darkness. HOME alone accomplished it once in the full light of day. It is necessary to reserve judgement on these facts which certainly seem quite incredible." (Gérard van Rijnberk, "Les Métasciences biologiques — Metaphysiologie et Metapsychologie", Paris, 1952, pp. 154-155)

This is all that this author "who for half a century studied occultism with profound respect" (Gérard van Rijnberk, op. cit., p. 205) had to say on the subject of levitation.

There is room here, however, to say something more. There is in the first place a distinction between elevation of the body due to <u>celestial attraction</u> and elevation of the body effected by electrical <u>repelling action</u> directed from below. The difference as such is comparable to that between the flight of a balloon filled with warm air and the flight of a rocket due to repulsion effected by the current that it emits.

An example of the second kind of levitation is known to me at first hand:-

A middle-aged gentleman (he was American) was talking to with a travelling companion in a compartment on an international train in Europe. The conversation revolved around the diverse currents and methods of contemporary occultism. The American advanced the radical thesis that there is a practical occultism and a literary or verbal occultism, and that the latter is hardly to be taken seriously, and that it is only the former kind of occultism that is worthy of its name. As his interlocutor would not let himself be convinced that facts of visible realization are the sole criteria of truth and value, the American believed it right to convince his interlocutor by a demonstration of fact — which he announced. Having announced it, he stretched out on his couchette (there were only these two people in the compartment) and started to breathe deeply, keeping complete silence. In one or two minutes his body, extended as it was on the couchette, slowly rose in the air to a height of several inches and remained hovering for close to a minute.

This demonstration having evoked in his interlocutor only a profound disgust, the anonymous master of levitation left the compartment before long and did not show himself again.

What merits drawing attention to — other than the fact of levitation effected by the will — is that the thing was done through a considerable effort. The experimenter had to be silent and concentrate himself entirely on a center in his organism in order to make a current of energy emanate which, acting in consecutive waves, repulsed him from the couchette and thus made him rise in the air. He did not elevate himself very high, because, it seems, elevation to a greater height would require an excessive effort. The demonstration having been made, the experimenter had a fatigued look and had no further desire to converse. A loss of energy in him was quite evident.

With respect to spiritualist mediums — no matter whether their levitation takes place in darkness or in the full light of day, visibility being in no way the sole means of control — there is nothing, from the Hermetic point of view, against admitting the possibility and even reality of their levitation. If there are cases of levitation of objects such as tables, attested through photography, why should it not be possible for mediums themselves to be able to be elevated in the air, as physical objects, by the same force which works for other physical objects?

It is said that the driving energy producing physical phenomena at mediumistic seances

emanates from the medium. But why should this energy, once exteriorized from the medium, not be able to elevate the medium himself — or herself? Why can it not also support the body of the medium?

Human electricity coming out from the organism of the medium can certainly make it the object of its action — which, moreover, "is narrated of several mediums" (Gérard van RIJNBERK, op.cit., p.155). But what is important to draw attention to in the case of the levitation of mediums is that the agent that levitates mediums is the same as that which effects the levitation of tables and other physical objects and that, consequently, it is not — and cannot be — a matter of the effect of the spiritual or "celestial gravitation" which acts in the case of the rapture of saints.

There are therefore <u>three categories</u> of levitation of the human body: rapture due to "celestial gravitation", levitation due to a current of human electricity emitted willfully (arbitrary magic), or involuntarily (mediumistic levitation). According to tradition, Simon Magus — whom St. Peter, through prayer, caused to fall — is attributed with levitation achieved through arbitrary magic. Levitation through arbitrary magic and mediumistic levitation have this in common, that both are effected by electrical force emanating from the human organism and acting by repulsion; in this they differ from the levitation of saints, which is due to attraction from above.

Concerning the center from which is made to emanate the current necessary for "Simonian" levitation, it is that of the "four-petalled lotus" (<u>m u l a d h a r a c h a k r a</u>), where the serpent power "<u>K u n d a l i n i</u>", the latent electrical force, is found. Now, this "serpent power" can be awoken and directed either above (Yoga) or below and outside (arbitrary magic). In the latter case it serves as the agent in levitation. It is thus that the American occultist, whose demonstration of levitation we recounted above, accomplished this phenomenon.

One can, without going into details, mention in this context the excursions in the countryside of witches and sorcerers, of whom it is said that they make use of "broomsticks" for this end. Now, the repulsing current emanating from the center at the base of the spine certainly produces the impression of a beam in the form of a broomstick; sorcerers, when splitting themselves off from, and leaving behind, their physical body, move after the fashion of modern rocket reactions.

Thus in Estonia, people in the country possess a special term for this phenomenon which, moreover, is more adequate than "broomstick", namely "t u l e h ä n t", which means to say: "beam of fire".

It follows, therefore, from the foregoing, that one must not cast all in the same mold: the levitation of saints, "Simonian" levitation and that of mediums. It is truly not something superhuman to distinguish them with sufficient clarity so that they are in no way confused, provided that one takes the trouble.

Returning to the subject of the man who lives under the law of celestial gravitation — the H a n g e d M a n — let us see what it is to live on the earth whilst being, at the same time, under the sway of the "celestial gravitational field".

The law of terrestrial gravitation, evolution and earthly life in general is <u>enfoldment</u>, i.e. the coagulation of mental, psychic and physical stuff around relative centers of gravitation, such as the earth, the nation, the individual, the organism — whilst the law of celestial gravitation, evolution and spiritual life in general is <u>radiation</u>, i.e. the extension of mental, psychic and physical stuff rising up to an absolute center of gravitation. — "Then the

righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matthew xiii,43) — this is a precise and comprehensive characterization of the law of celestial gravitation.

The corresponding formula expressing the essence of the law of terrestrial gravitation is found in chapter VI of Genesis:- "The giants were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These are the heroes who were famous in antiquity" (Genesis vi,4).

The "sons of God" (b e n e h a - e l o h i m), i.e. entities who lived in the field of divine gravitation, changed gravitational field in giving way to the attraction of possession or enfoldment, and gave birth to beings endowed with a great force of enfoldment — the "giants" (n e p h e l i m). They exchanged radiation (the state of the sons of God) for enfoldment (the state of the giants on earth). And since this time the world of enfoldment has tended to produce the strong hero (Gibbor), whilst the world of radiation has tended to give birth to the herald of radiation, the "righteous man" (t s a d d i k), on the earth. It was not so long ago that Friedrich NIETZSCHE loudly proclaimed himself champion of the ideal of the gibbor, the "superman" (Uebermensch). Moreover, having once birched the Righteous One, Nietzsche wove a crown of thorns, placed it on His head, and affronted and mocked Him in his books "Ecce Homo" and "Antichrist".

The world is divided. There are those who worship the "gibbor", the strong Hero — Nietzsche manifested with force and talent that this is so — and there are those who love the "tsaddik", the Righteous Man.

Yes, indeed, this is so. Terrestrial gravitation, "the flesh", pushes mankind towards the ideal of enfoldment, i.e. possession, power and enjoyment, whilst celestial gravitation, "the spirit", draws mankind towards the ideal of radiation, i.e. poverty, obedience and chastity.

May occultists, esotericists and hermeticists take account of this state of things and may they understand that the only side they can take without betraying the soul of the Tradition is that of ranging themselves resolutely and without reserve on the side of radiation, i.e. to take the side of the Righteous Man, the Hanged Man! May they abandon the dreams and phantoms having to do with the "superman", which still haunt certain esoteric fraternities and societies either in the guise of a "Grand Master", or a "Great Initiate", or an "Arch Mage"! May our communities become those of people who learn from everyone instead of teaching everyone! May they recruit people who live in consciousness of having behaved wrongly towards God, neighbor and the world, rather than those who think they are in the right! In a word, may they be subject to celestial attraction, which acts in awakening the inclination towards and love for poverty, obedience and chastity!

We must not only see and think clearly, but also will clearly. For one cannot serve two masters at once.

I have moved away from the subject of the concrete state of the man who lives under the law of celestial gravitation. Let us return to this.

Two things characterize the state of the spiritual man: that he is suspended and that he is upside down.

Here is what St. Teresa says about the first characteristic trait:

> "The soul seems to me to be in this state when no comfort comes to it from heaven and it is not there itself, and when it desires none from the earth and is not there

either. Then it is as if crucified between heaven and earth, suffering and receiving no help from either." ("The Life of St. Teresa of Avila"; chapter XX, trsl. J.M. Cohen, London, 1957, p. 140)

The soul is suspended between heaven and earth; it experiences complete solitude. For here it is no longer a matter of ordinary solitude where one is alone in the world, but rather of complete solitude where one is alone because one is outside of the world — the celestial as well as the terrestrial world. "Transported thus into this desert it seems that the soul can certainly, in all truth, say with the Royal Prophet:- "I lie awake, I am like a lonely bird on the housetop." (Psalm 102,7) "It is possible that King David was experiencing this same loneliness when he wrote these words. This verse comes to my mind at these times in such a way that it seems to be fulfilled in me. It is a comfort to me to know that others have felt these extremes of loneliness, and an even greater comfort that they have been people of such quality." ("The Life of St. TERESA", trsl. J.M. Cohen, chapter XX, London, 1957, p. 139)

This is the "zero point" between the fields of terrestrial and celestial gravitation. It is from there that the soul either is elevated in contemplation of divine and celestial things, or descends to act in the human and terrestrial domain, but this "zero point" is certainly the place of its permanent sojourn. After elevation or after the accomplishment of an act, it returns there. The solitude of the desert between the two worlds is its abode.

The other characteristic train of the spiritual man is that he is u p s i d e d o w n. This means to say, firstly, that the "solid ground" under his feet is found above, whilst the ground below is only the concern and perception of the head. Secondly, it means to say that his will is connected with heaven and is found in immediate contact (not by the intermediary of thought and feeling) with the spiritual world. This is in such a way that his will "knows" things that the head — his thinking — still does not know, and so that it is the future, the celestial designs for the future, which work in and through his will rather than experience and memory of the past. He is therefore literally the "man of the future", the final cause being the element activating his will. He is the "man of desire", in the sense of the book of Daniel and in the sense of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, i.e. the man whose will is set high, above the powers of the head — above thought, imagination and memory.

Now, the normal relationship between thought, feeling and the will for a civilized and educated man is such that his thought awakens feeling and directs the will. Thought plays a stimulating role, by means of imagination, towards feeling, and an educative role, by means of imagination and feeling, towards the will. Having to act, one thinks, one imagines, one feels, and — lastly — one desires and acts.

This is not so for the "spiritual man". For him it is the will which plays the stimulating and educative role towards feeling and thought. He acts first, then he desires, then he feels the worth of his action, and lastly he understands.

Abraham left his country of birth and went — in crossing the desert — into a strange country where, centuries later, a people descended from him was to find its native land and where, several centuries later on, the work of mankind's salvation was to take place. Did he "know" all this? Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that he acted as if he knew — his will being

enamored with these future things, and by their greatness and significance. No, in the sense that he did not have in his thoughts and imagination a plan or clear program concerning how, when and through what stages, precisely, these things would be realized.

The certainty which in the first place takes hold of the will, from whence it takes its effects on feeling and thought, is precisely what the apostle Paul understood by the expression "faith" (pistis, fides). According to him "faith is the firm assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen".
And "by faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place which he was to receive as an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was to go. (Hebrews xi, 1, 8)

Abraham had therefore had "the firm assurance of things hoped for" after having experienced "the conviction of things not seen", i.e. his will knew, whilst his mind and imagination "did not see" or did not have the kind of assurance proper to them. All the same, he obeyed and left without knowing where he was going, i.e. he acted before his thought and imagination had understood the whole world implied in his action. When he left, therefore, his head followed his feet; his feet were then "above", in so far as they experienced the commandment of Heaven, and his head obeyed them and was turned "below", in so far as it saw nothing but the privations, risks and perils of the enterprise. Abraham therefore found himself precisely in the condition of the Hanged Man of our Arcanum.

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called..." .. Obeyed when he was called ... — here is the key to the mystery of faith, or knowledge of the will.

The will is an active force; it is not naturally an organ of perception. In order for it to be able to perceive it should not — it must not — become passive, for then it would fall asleep or fade away, because its very nature is activity, and in ceasing to be active it would cease to be will; no, it should change center of gravitation, i.e. to transform "my will" into "thy will". It is the inner act of love alone which can accomplish the change of center that the will uses or around which it gravitates. Instead of gravitating around the center "me", it can orientate itself towards the center "you". This transformation, effected by love, is what one calls "Obedience".

Now, it is through obedience that the will is able to perceive. What it is able to perceive or be infused with is revelation from above, which inspires, directs and strengthens.

It is thus that the will of a martyr can sustain anything and that the will of a thaumaturgist can accomplish everything.

Abraham's divine call was such an act of infused revelation. "And he obeyed", says the Apostle. It is nevertheless necessary to add here that he obeyed even before his departure. For the divine call itself presupposes obedience — the transcentralization of the will which renders the will capable of receiving a divine call from above. For the will must already be in a state of obedience in order for it to be able to perceive the inspiration or intuition from above and to receive the imprint of the divine call, i.e. the gift of faith.

Faith, as a supernatural gift, which is the case here, is not the same thing as the natural, rational and morally founded confidence that one has in an authority. The confidence that one puts in a doctor, judge or priest is only natural. In fact, it is rational and in accordance with human justice to recognize the authority of experienced experts, and hence to place one's trust in them. Saint Teresa had complete confidence in her confessors, who nevertheless

were mistaken about the serious question of the source of her mystical, gnostic and magical experiences, notably whether they had their origin from God or from a demon. But in the conflict between supernatural faith and natural confidence — which took place in her when her confessors, and also theologians of authority, declared that her spiritual experiences originated from a demon — it was faith which prevailed. For it was a conflict between the immediate-and-authentic divine action on the will, and the confidence of human thought and feeling in an authority, who is only a second-hand source. It was not only in her that the authentic divine revelation prevailed, but also it brought the confessors and theologians in question to recognize its authenticity.

The raptures of Saint Teresa were those of faith, i.e. the union of the <u>will</u> with God, which left behind the other powers of the soul, namely thought and imagination. Here is what she says concerning this:

> "I can only say that the soul conceives itself to be near God, and that <u>it is left with such a conviction</u> that <u>it cannot possibly help believing</u>. All the faculties (thought, imagination, memory) are in abeyance, and so suspended, as I have said, that their operations cannot be followed. If the soul has previously been meditating on any subject, it vanishes from the memory at once, as completely as if it had never been thought of. If it has been reading, it is unable to remember it or dwell on the words; and it is the same with vocal prayer. So the restless little moth of memory has its wings burned, and it can flutter no more. The will must be fully occupied in loving, but does not understand how it loves. If it understands, it does not understand how it understands, or at least, cannot comprehend anything of what it understands. I do not think it understands at all, because, as I have said, it does not understand itself. Nor can I myself understand this....
>
> Let it be observed too that however long the soul may enjoy this suspension of the faculties, the actual time is, in my opinion, very short. Half an hour would be a very long period of rapture, longer, I think, than any I ever experienced. Actually, it is very difficult to judge the time, since the senses are in abeyance. But I do not think that it can ever be long before one of them recovers. <u>It is the will that maintains the contact</u>. But the other two faculties soon begin to trouble it once more. But, as the will is calm, they become suspended again, and they are quiet for a little longer. But eventually they spring into life again. In this way some hours may be — and are — spent in prayer. For once the two faculties have begun to grow drunk on the taste of this wine, they are very ready to give themselves up again in order to enjoy some more. <u>Then they keep company with the will</u>, and the three rejoice together." ("The Life of St. Teresa", trsl. J.M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp. 126-127)

The will united with God and the two other faculties suspended is the state of the soul in receiving the supernatural gift of faith, and it is certainly the faith thus experienced which triumphed for Saint Teresa over scruples due to the confidence which she bore towards the theologians.

The state of soul described by Saint Teresa corresponds overall still more to the condition of the Hanged Man of our Arcanum. For, like him, the soul of Saint Teresa was <u>upside down</u>, i.e. where the will precedes the head (understanding and memory) and is raised above it. The will then receives the divine imprint that the head at some time will understand — or not.

Now, practical Hermeticism has the aspiration that the two other powers keep company with the will at the moment when this latter is in the state of complete obedience towards the Divine, i.e. it aspires to the realization of the last sentence of the above-quoted text:-

"Then they (the two other powers) keep company with the will, and the Three rejoice together"-

- let us add: in the joy of union, knowledge and the future realization of this experience — Hermeticism being a totality comprising mysticism, gnosis and divine magic.

Practical Hermeticism therefore applies itself to educating thought and imagination (or memory) to keep in step with the will. This is why it requires constant effort of thought and imagination combined in order to think, meditate and contemplate in symbols — symbolism being the sole means of rendering thought and imagination capable of not being suspended when the will submits to revelation from above and enabling them to unite with it in its act of receptive obedience, so that the soul not only has a revelation of Faith but also participates in this revelation with its understanding and memory.

This is the principal point of practical Hermeticism and, at the same time, its contribution to Christian mysticism. I say Christian mysticism and not Christian mystical theology, because theology rationalizes the material of mystical experience in deriving rules and laws, whilst Hermeticism wants thought and imagination to participate in this experience. Its aim is found in the experience itself, not in the domain of explaining it or accounting for it.

Meanwhile, the hermeticist is also a "Hanged Man". For him, too, faith predominates at the beginning and for a long time subsequently. This is because it is a difficult task, exacting inner asceticism for a long time, to render thought and imagination capable of being present and upright by the altar where the fire of faith is kindled and burns. But with time the gap between the certainty of faith and that of knowledge becomes narrower and narrower. Thought and imagination become more and more capable of participating in the revelation of faith to the will — until the day arrives when they participate in it on equal footing with the will. This is then the spiritual event that is designated — "hermetic Initiation".

Thus, I know a man who, being a soldier in the White Army and having been unjustly accused by two officers of the allied marines, "understood" in the space of an instant of time the relationship which exists between Eternity and the Instant. This was a lightning flash received from above through the will and through thought and through imagination. The three powers of the soul were taken hold of and illumined by it simultaneously.

Authentic Hermeticism can therefore never be in contradiction with authentic faith. It can contradict only the opinions of theologians, i.e. not the faith but the confidence that is borne towards the statements of theologians. The strange thing is that theologians are as a rule very modest and even humble people, but from the moment that they sit in the chair of their science and drape themselves with the mantle of its "primary and secondary conclusions" — and, above all, the "general concensus" — they change and are no longer recognizable. From the modest people that they are, they change all of a sudden into sources of divine oracles. This is because their science is the most pretentious of all sciences that exist, being interpretative of the absolute truth of Revelation. In contrast, the representatives of the

natural sciences are, as a rule, very pretentious people, but the discipline of their science renders them modest. This is because their science is modest, being interpretative of the relative truth of experience.

Thus we have a paradox: modest people become pretentious thanks to their science, and pretentious people become modest, again thanks to their science. The danger for the one is knowing too much; the danger for the others is to know nothing. Thus, from the mouth of one of its conscientious representatives, the physiologist DU BOIS-REYMOND, empirical science declared itself "ignoramus et ignorabimus" ("we do not know and we shall never know") with regard to the seven "enigmas" of the world ("Welträtsel"):

1. the essence of matter and energy;
2. the origin of motion;
3. the origin of the senses (sense-perception);
4. the question of free will;
5. the origin of life;
6. the purposeful organization of Nature;
7. the origin of thought and language.

(E.H. Du Bois-REYMOND, "Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens. Die sieben Welträtsel", Leipzig, 1882)

On the other hand, there is complete certainty for certain theologians not only with regard to the above enigmas but also with respect to the destiny of the soul after the death of the body, and to what then is — or is not — possible. Thus we read: "At its departure from the body, the soul is no longer in a position to change its moral orientation, nor to go back on its previous adherence to sin but, on the contrary, it fixes itself in the disposition of will found at the precise instant of death; it becomes henceforth inflexible, and rebels against every idea of retraction, conversion or repentance" (Cardinal Louis BILLOT, "Études", Paris, 1923, p.392) and --

"Eternal punishment exists only in the function of the eternal perseverance of of the perverse disposition of unrepentants on departing from the present life". (ibid, p.394)

Accordingly, it is therefore the body and not the soul which bears within it the possibility of changing its moral orientation, going back on adherence to sin, being converted, and repenting; it is therefore the precise instant of death and not the totality of earthly life which determines for all eternity the moral disposition of the soul and therefore its eternal destiny; the body dying, the soul at the instant of death is thus made to depart like a rocket with a pre-fixed program (a pre-set rocket program) for eternity. The mercy of God therefore acts only at the instant of death of the body, the destiny of the soul subsequently being only a semi-mechanical deployment of the soul's disposition at the instant of its departure from the body.

These are undoubtedly monstrous conclusions. It is evident, however, that if the conscientious Du Bois-Reymond is too timid and, in consequence of this fact, opens the doors to skepticism, the zealous theologian is, in contrast, rash and, as a consequence of this fact, opens the doors to unbelief. For it is impossible to believe simultaneously Cardinal Billot's statement and that of the Gospel which says:-

"If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray?... So it is the will of my Father who is in heaven that not one of these little ones should perish." (Matthew, xviii, 12, 14)

One is bound to believe either that the mercy of God is limited, i.e. that it extends only to the instant of bodily death, or that it is infinite and never ceases, i.e. that it possesses the means of acting also after the instant of the soul's separation from the body. Here the love — no, the very justice — of God is in question.

Du Bois-Reymond ought to have said: "Being given the methods of contemporary science and the faculties of knowledge known up to the present time, the seven great world enigmas seem to be insoluble; but if the methods and faculties of knowledge change at some time without losing their scientific character, it could be otherwise with the enigmas in question." And would it not be better if Cardinal Billot had said: "In the Scriptures there are passages relating to the love of God and to the chastisement of sin which, given the present character of our reasoning and moral sentiment, seem to be contradictory. As it is impossible for them to be really contradictory, I have formed a personal opinion which seems to me to reconcile them in a satisfactory way. But I do not know if it is the only possible solution to the problem, or whether there are other and better ones. What is nevertheless certain is that freedom exists and that it entails the risk of eternal hell, whatever the exact sense of the word 'eternal' may be, this being a dogma of the Faith. With respect to the mechanism of the realization of this truth, I have the following opinion: "--- (and then he could give his opinion that earthly life is the domain of freedom, whilst the other world is that of fate — an opinion that he would still have to defend against pertinent arguments in favor of the contrary thesis).

Now, practical Hermeticism is — like Christian mysticism — based on the experience of authentic faith, i.e. the experience of the human being upside down, where the will is above intellectuality and imagination. Its practical aim is nevertheless to render the intellect and imagination equal companions of the will favored by revelation from above.

And here is how this is to be achieved:

One moralizes thought in substituting moral logic for formal logic. One makes an entrance for moral warmth in the domain of "cold thought". At the same time, one intellectualizes the the imagination by disciplining it and submitting it to the laws of moral logic. This is what GOETHE understood by "exact imagination" ("exakte Phantasie"), i.e. dispensing with imagination which plays according to free and arbitrary association, and instead applying it to work in accordance with the associations dictated by moral logic — in harmony with the laws of symbolism.

It is thus that thought and imagination become capable of being attentive to and participating in the experience of the will receiving favors from above.

The statement: "One moralizes thought in substituting moral logic for formal logic" could be said to be very concise, and calls for an amplification. It means to say that formal logic — whether explicitly or implicitly operating with syllogistic forms is not important — cedes its function as the supreme court of appeal to the moral logic of conscience. (Syllogistic logic operates with forms of syllogisms, where two suppositions together constitute a common implication, and where the conclusion comprises that which is implied. — translator's note) Thus the logic of Caiaphas' argument, which persuaded the assembly of the Sanhedrin to make a decision against Jesus-Christ, was impeccable from the point of view of formal logic, but was at the same time a great violation of

moral logic." It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish" (John xi, 50) — this was Caiaphas' argument. This argument is based on the logical principle that the part is less than the whole, the part being "one man" and the whole being "the nation".

Being faced with the alternative — "If we let him go, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come to destroy our city and our nation" — the decision was taken to sacrifice the part for the whole.

For moral logic, however, the quantitative principle that the part is less than the whole is not valid in a general sense; there are distinctions to be made. For already in a living organism where it is not the size but rather the importance of the vital function which counts, the principle in question would be: "the part is equal to the whole". Because, for example, the heart, which is only a small part of the whole human organism, cannot be sacrificed without sacrificing the life of the whole organism.

And in the moral and spiritual domain, where it is only quality which counts, one Righteous Man is worth more than the whole nation, if it is a question not of voluntary sacrifice but rather of the one who must be sacrificed. Thus in the spiritual and moral domain the above logical principle can be transformed into its opposite formula:- "the part is greater than the whole".

Here is an example, therefore, of the operation of "moral logic" or concrete and qualitative logic, quite different from formal and quantitative logic. It is the conflict between the logic of the Logos and that of "this world", which the Apostle Paul spoke of when he said: -

> .."... they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated — of whom the world was not worthy — wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." (Hebrews xi, 37-38)

"Moral logic" is the human analogy of that of the Logos "that enlightens every man coming into the world" (John i, 9). It is the logic of Faith, i.e. the logic of thought which participates in the revelation accorded to the will. "Moral logic" introduces warmth into the light of thought, so that the latter becomes solar, instead of lunar, which is what it is when it has only light alone and is cold, without warmth.

"One intellectualizes the imagination by disciplining it and submitting it to the laws of moral logic". This means to say that a kind of asceticism should be applied to the life of imagination in order to transform its arbitrary play into work inspired and directed from above. Here symbolism plays the leading role — one which is both preparatory and educational. For symbolism is simultaneously imaginative and logical, i.e. logical according to "moral logic".

Thus the Arcana of the Tarot with which we are occupied constitute a practical school of education for the imagination, with a view to rendering it capable of participating on an equal footing with "solarized" thought and "zodiacalized" will in the revelation from above. It is then intellectualized, i.e. it loses the feverish warmth which is normal for it and becomes luminous; it is "selenized" and becomes "lunar", just as the intellect was before its "solarization" by moral logic. The prayer that is made for souls in purgatory: "Locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis dona eis Domine" ("give to them, O Lord, a place of refreshment, light and peace"), expresses well that it is necessary for the imagination to become reflecting instead of fantasizing.

The "zodiacalization" of the will, the "solarization" of thought and the "selenization" (or "lunarization") of imagination — we have chosen these three terms to signify the voluntary sacrifice of the soul's powers to Heaven — means to say: that the will becomes an organ of perception and execution towards God, as the zodiac is in the macrocosm; that thought becomes both warm and luminous, as the sun is in the macrocosm; that, lastly, the imagination

becomes reflecting towards truth, as the moon is towards the sun in the macrocosm.

It is a matter, therefore, of sacrificing the three powers of the soul to Heaven. This sacrifice is nothing other than the three traditional and universal vows — that of obedience or the sacrifice of the will, that of poverty or the sacrifice of thought, and that of chastity or the sacrifice of imagination.

It is thus that the will, thought and imagination become reflectors of the revelation from above, instead of being instruments of human arbitrariness.

This means to say, in terms of esoteric psycho-physiology, that the disposition of the crown center (the "eight-petalled lotus") — which is always beyond the reach of human arbitrariness and which is constantly in a state of "divine repose", i.e. which is always at the disposal of Heaven — extends to the other centers or "lotuses". One after the other they withdraw from the influence of human arbitrariness and immerse themselves in "divine repose", i.e. they become organs of pure revelation. The entire human psycho-physiological organization thus becomes a divine instrument. Saintliness is achieved when all seven (or eight - in rare cases) centers are entirely at the disposal of Heaven. The degrees of saintliness — from the point of view of the human psycho-physiological organization — depend on how many and which centers are at the disposal of Heaven.

With respect to Hermeticists, they do not as a rule attain to complete saintliness, where all seven centers are put at the disposal of the divine, since their work and mission — if there is a mission — entails and exacts efforts and labors which presuppose the preservation of human initiative, i.e. that at least the frontal center (the "two-petalled lotus") remains at the disposal of freedom (should the case arise) of human arbitrariness. I say at least the "two-petalled lotus" remains at the disposal of the individual because it is the center of intellectual initiative. It can certainly be taken hold of by revelation from above for some time — instants, minutes, even hours — but, as a rule, for the Hermeticist this must remain at his discretion. Indeed, it would be very distressing for him to be able to think only what is caused from above and to turn his intellectual gaze only towards what is determined from above.

I know a man who had thus "lost" the use of his center of intellectual initiative, which is at the same time that of the direction of attention, and who — being a hermeticist — suffered very much from this. He was able to comprehend very many great things — above all things of general significance — but he was as if paralyzed concerning "his" personal problems. He was not able to think about what he wanted to, nor to direct his attention to what he wanted to see and understand. This lasted some time until use of the center in question was "restored" to him by the intervention of a benefactor from above. I would recommend people who have similar or identical difficulties to address themselves to the Holy Archangel Michael who is, it seems to me, a very special friend and protector of the kind of hermeticists that I have in view in these Letters, i.e. people who want to unite saintliness and initiation, or who aspire to a Hermeticism that is holy and blessed from above.

The Card of the twelfth Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Hanged Man", represents in the first place the man whose will is "zodiacalized", because here it is this which is the decisive spiritual event — the "solarization" of thought and the "selenization" of the imagination being only consequences. The two trees, between which the Hanged Man is balanced, bear twelve scars left by their cut branches. They are twelve — these branches — because the the zodiac has a twelvefold action and influence; and they are cut, because the Hanged Man is beyond their action and influence, and because their essence is in him. The twelve branches

are cut and inactive outwardly, having become the <u>will</u> of the Hanged Man — the "zodiacalized" will, as we have said. The Hanged Man has <u>absorbed</u> the Zodiac; he has himself <u>become</u> the Zodiac. He is the T h i r t e e n t h, in whose will the <u>Twelve Servants of God</u>, who are the twelve channels of His Will, are present.

For t w e l v e is the number of modalities of the Will and its action; <u>seven</u> is the number of basic modalities of Feeling and imagination; <u>three</u> is the numerical law of Thought and word; and <u>o n e</u>, lastly, is the number of the Self who thinks, feels and wills. The <u>m o n a d</u> therefore reveals itself through the <u>trinity</u> underlying thought and word, through the <u>septenary</u> underlying feeling and imagination, and through the <u>duodenary</u> underlying will and action.

The sum of the numbers of reality — one, three, seven and twelve — is t w e n t y - t w o, ((and not twenty-three, since O N E transcends, surpasses and embraces the other numbers mentioned previously: it makes of "three" a mysterious quaternary, of "seven" it makes an eighth which envelops it and makes it into a unity, and it is the "thirteenth" — as we have already mentioned — in the outpouring of the "zodiacal" creative forces of the Twelve Servants of God)). This is the true reason for for the fact that there are <u>twenty-two</u> Major Arcana of the Tarot, and no more and no less. Because the author — or authors, if we think in terms of collaboration from the vertical dimension of three superimposed worlds — of the Tarot proposed to give articulated symbolic expression only to things which count. And how could he count less or more than twenty-two!? Could he omit the Monad — the Fundamental unity behind the worlds of the macrocosm or God, and the Fundamental unity behind the states of consciousness of the microcosm, or the Soul? Could he pass by the Holy Trinity of God the Creator, Savior and Sanctifier? Or could he pass by the trinity of the human being, who is by analogy an image of God in his spiritual, soul and corporeal being? After that, could he neglect or remain blind to the action of the trinity in the four elements — radiation, expansion, mobility and stability, or Fire, Air, Water and Earth? And after having taken account of the action of the trinity <u>in</u> the quaternary of elements, how could he not pay attention to the real manifestation of the action of the trinity <u>through</u> the quaternary, i.e. the three times four modalities of action, being the three modalities of action of the trinity through the four means of realizing it?

Not being able to suppress any of the four members of the Sacred Name or Tetragrammaton — which comprises four members or numbers: one, three, seven and twelve —, the author of the Tarot conceived and designed the twenty-two Arcana. But twenty-two is four, and four is three revealing one. The Tarot is therefore unity elucidated in twenty-two symbolic ways.

Concerning the Hanged Man, the twelve branches of the two trees between which he balances are cut. This means to say — or indicate — that he has reduced the twelve to one and that it is himself, the Hanged Man, who is the sole manifestation of it. He has, so to say, "swallowed" the Zodiac, which amounts to the fact that his will has become identical with the Will of the Divine, which manifests itself in three times four ways. He bears in himself — or rather, he is borne by it — the <u>synthesis</u> of the twelve modalities

of action of divine and fundamental Will.

This is what is meant by "reducing the twelve to one". It is to be hanged; it is to be upside down; and it is to live under the sign of celestial gravitation instead of that of terrestrial gravitation.

We have said: the Hanged Man is the Thirteenth. Now, to be the thirteenth can signify two things: either the reduction of the twelve to one — and then the Hanged Man represents the fundamental unity of the twelve modalities of Will — or else the crystallization of a thirteenth synthetic element. In the latter case, it would be a matter of a skeleton, which is the last synthetic crystallization of "zodiacal" will, and which is both the principle and concrete image of death. As death and its relationship to the skeleton will be the subject of the following Letter on the thirteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, "Death", I ask you, dear Unknown Friend, to remember the context of the two problems — as indicated here — namely the problem of the identity of individual will with divine will and the problem of attraction from above in its double aspect of ecstasy and death.

For it is both in ecstasy and in the case of natural death that the "zodiacalization" of the will takes place.

With respect to the Hanged Man, he represents the first alternative, i.e. the fundamental unity of the twelve modalities of divine Will, which are the effective and final causes of radiation, expansion, mobility and stability — spiritual, psychic and material.

One finds a profound and breathtaking feeling of these cosmic depths in the cosmogonic hymn of the Rigveda (x, 129; "The Song of Creation"). It awakens in the meditant at least a feeling of the profundity of the fundamental cosmic incentive towards, or feeling for, "zodiacality". The hymn is as follows:-

"At first there was neither non-Being nor Being.
There was no kingdom of air, nor firmament beyond it.
What moved powerfully? Where? Under whose protection?
Was Water there, unfathomably profound?

There was then neither death nor immortality;
There was no distinguishing sign of Night and Day.
Only One thing breathed of its own primal impulse, without any breath.
That was all that was there, and outside of this there was nothing else.

In the beginning darkness was couched in darkness.
This universe was nothing but undiscriminated waves.
Then, by the power of Ardor (TAPAS), the One was born,
Empty and concealed by emptiness.

Desire arose, the original unfolding,
Which was the first seed of Wisdom (Conscience).
Searching deeply in themselves, the RISHIS (Sages) discovered,
Through their own reflection: the bond of Being in non-Being.

Their cord was stretched transversely.
What was above it? What was below it?
There were seed givers, there were powers.
Spontaneous Élan (s v a d h a) was below, the Gift of self was above.."

This is what a Hindu soul felt one starry night more than thirty centuries ago, in beholding the universe. Is it not a commentary on the natural mysticism — " F i a t l u x " ("Let there be light") — of Genesis?

It is this profound sphere, from whence the anonymous author of the Vedic hymn drew his inspiration, in which the Hanged Man participates through his will. He is the link between Being and non-Being, between Darkness and created Light. He is found suspended between the potential and the real. And it is the potential which is more real for him than the real properly said. He lives by authentic <u>faith</u> — what the hermetic book " K o r e K o s m u " designates as "the gift of black perfection" or "the gift of Perfect Night", i.e. the gift of perfect certainty drawn from the night of ultra-luminous darkness. For there is darkness and Darkness. The former is that of ignorance and blindness; the latter is that of knowledge going beyond natural human cognitive powers; it reveals itself to intuitive seeing. It is ultra-luminous in the same sense that ultra-violet rays go beyond the human eye's scale of natural visibility.

The following is a passage from the " V i t a A n t o n i i " ("Life of St. Anthony") by Saint ATHANASIUS, bishop of Alexandria, relating to this subject:

"And indeed, after this still others came. They were of those who among the pagans are supposedly wise. They asked him to state an argument for our faith in Christ...
(Anthony said to them through an interpreter:)".. since, of course, you pin your faith on demonstrative proofs and this is an art in which you are masters, and you want us also not to worship God without demonstrative arguments — do you first tell me this: How does precise knowledge of things come about, especially knowledge about God? Is it by verbal proof or by an act of faith? And which comes first, an active faith or verbal proof?" - When they replied that the act of faith takes precedence and that this constitutes accurate knowledge, Anthony said: "Well said! Faith arises from the disposition of the soul, while dialectic comes from the skill of those who devise it. Accordingly, those who are equipped with an active faith have no need of verbal argument, and probably find it even superfluous. For what we apprehend by faith, that you attempt to construct by arguments; and often you cannot even express what we perceive. The conclusion is that an active faith is better and stronger than your sophistic arguments..."... (St. Athanasius, "The Life of St. Anthony"; trsl. R.T. Meyer, Westminster, 1950, pp.81, 83-84)

Here we have a clear comparison of the certainty due to "active faith" and that due to the demonstration by reasoning. The difference between them is the same as that between a photograph of a person and a meeting with this person. It is the difference that there is between image and reality, between an idea that one makes of the truth and the truth itself, present and acting.

The certainty of faith springs from the actual meeting with truth and its persuasive and transforming action, whilst that of certainty due to sound reasoning is only a degree — raised to a greater or lesser extent — of <u>semblance of the truth</u>, because it depends on

the validity of our reasoning, and on the completeness and exactness of the elements which serve as its basis. A new item of information can turn the whole edifice of our reasoning upside down, just as an item of information which is proved false or inexact can have the same consequence. This is why all conviction founded on reasoning is intrinsically hypothetical and implies the following reservation: "Provided that the items of information that I possess are complete and exact, and that there arise no others to contradict them, I am led by the following arguments to the conclusion that... etc.." — At the same time, the certainty of faith has nothing hypothetical about it: it is absolute. The Christian martyrs did not die for hypotheses, but rather for the truths of faith of which they were absolutely certain.

May I be spared the objection that communists also sometimes die for their Marxism-Leninism! Because if they do so voluntarily, it is not for the dogmas (concerning the supremacy of the economy, the ideological superstructure, etc.) that they have, but rather for the grain of Christian truth which takes hold of their hearts, namely that of human brotherhood and social justice. Materialism as such does not have — and cannot have — martyrs; and if it seems so, then those whom materialism accounts as such, truth to tell, bear witness against it. For their testimony is as follows: "There are values higher than economics, higher even than life, because we sacrifice not only material goods but also our very lives." Such is their testimony against materialistic Marxism. Now follows their testimony against Christianity: "We have lost the fullness of faith; there remains to us only a grain. But even this grain which remains is so precious that we give our lives for it. And you who have fullness, what is your sacrifice for it?" Such is their testimony against Christianity... in so far as the latter is also materialistic. For there is doctrinal materialism alongside the will influenced by Faith, and there is on the other hand doctrinal spiritualism alongside the will influenced by materialistic interests.

It is this duality which produces heresies and sects. Thus the adherents of ARIUS (Arianism) denied the divinity of Jesus-Christ not because of it being contrary to reason, but rather because it seemed to them contrary to reason as a consequence of the fact that their will was opposed to it. The Messiah that they wanted was the Messiah wanted by Jewish orthodoxy. For this reason, just as this latter rejected the Christ and had him crucified, accusing him of having "made himself the Son of God" ("The Jews answered Pilate: We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son God" — John xix, 7), so did the followers of Arius advance the same accusation against the Church in declaring that it had made him the Son of God. The Arianists were in no way less instructed or less intellectually endowed than the orthodox believers. What they were lacking was the will illumined by revelation from above, i.e. authentic faith. It remained such as it was before Jesus-Christ, such as it had lived and acted in Jewish orthodoxy. In fact, the Arianists wanted another Messiah and, being Christian, they applied themselves to changing the Messiah so as to conform to their pre-Christian will.

Yet in the case where the will perceives the revelation from above and understanding follows this up, as in the case of the Hanged Man, certainty is absolute and no heresy could result, if we understand by "heresy" doctrines or maxims of prejudice to the cause of salvation or incompatible with the truths of faith. The Hanged Man can certainly be accused of heresy, but he can never be its perpetrator. His element is authentic faith — and how could authentic faith, or divine action in the human will, engender things contrary to itself?

Do you know what the "ex cathedra" infallibility of the pope in matters of doctrine and morality is? It is that he finds himself in the condition of the Hanged Man when he makes a declaration "ex cathedra" (i.e. in the condition of the Hanged Man) concerning things of faith and morality... It is the condition in which the apostle Peter was when he was able to say, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and of which the Lord said in reply, "Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew xvi, 16-17). And just as a stone does not have its own motion, and can only be a moved object, so is the will of he who is found in the condition of the Hanged Man deprived of its own movement and can only be moved from above.

This is one side of the mystery of the infallibility in things of faith and morality. It is the arbitrary paralyzed and reduced to nothing — the state of the stone — which safeguards the infallibility of judgement in this domain. It is above all a matter of the elimination of the source of errors — for, as a rule, the Roman pontiff making an "ex cathedra" statement does not do so as a prophet but as a pontiff.

The whole mystery of infallibility has, without doubt, still other aspects, including what we discussed in the fifth Letter on the fifth Arcanum of the Tarot, "The Pope", and still greater depths, but the aspect which is presented in the light of the Arcanum "The Hanged Man" is of a nature to bring to bear the most clarity on the problem in question — this Arcanum being that of authentic faith

Now, authentic faith brings with it absolute certainty, above all when it is not limited to the will alone but succeeds in making understanding and imagination also participate in its experience. Then the soul becomes the seat of a kind of Christian faith-wisdom-symbolism similar to the faith-wisdom-symbolism of the Z o h a r, i.e. that of the Jewish Cabbala. The latter is then to the former as the Old Testament is to the New Testament. And just as the Old Testament and the New Testament together comprise the Holy Scripture, so do the Jewish Cabbala and Christian faith-wisdom-symbolism together constitute Christian Hermeticism. Just as in Christian theology one would not dispense with the Old Testament, similarly in Christian Hermeticism one would not dispense with the Cabbala. This is the law of continuity of the living tradition, or the commandment: "Honor thy father and thy mother". The mother of Christian Hermeticism is the Cabbala and its father is Egyptian Hermeticism, the Hellenistic writings of which we have received under the title "Corpus Hermeticum" — comprising 29 (or more) treatises. The "Corpus Hermeticum" (works attributed to or inspired by Hermes Trismegistus) is the Egyptian-Hellenistic counterpart to the Jewish Zohar and the Jewish Cabbala in general.

Certainly, it is not a matter of "borrowing" — which is, moreover, always sterile — the method of historical and philological science, because although "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii, 22), he nevertheless had a real and authentic meeting with "the angel of the LORD who appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush" (Exodus iii, 2). It is this meeting which was the commencement of his mission.

No, things <u>actually experienced</u> cannot be borrowed. They follow one another, as human generations follow one another and are linked only by the profound ties of heredity, i.e. the continuity of the <u>life</u> of tradition through effort, problems, aspirations, suffering. Just as one generation passes to another the <u>organs</u> of knowledge and the <u>vital impulse</u> with respect to their use, so the stages in a spiritual tradition such as that of Egypt-Israel-Christendom are, so to say,

incarnations of new souls who inherit only the organs and the impulse (body and blood) of their predecessors. Israel is a new soul in comparison with Egypt, and Christendom is a new soul in comparison with Israel. But Egypt aspired to the God of gods, and succeeded in achieving a high knowledge — even authentic faith — of God, as the writings of the "Corpus Hermeticum" prove; Israel had intercourse with this God through the intermediary of Moses and the prophets; lastly, concerning Christianity, God was made flesh. From the sanctuaries of Egypt, through the desert of Sinai, to the cross of Calvary, there is a way — the way of divine revelation, on the one hand, and the historical way of monotheism in human consciousness, on the other hand. Christianity in no way "borrowed" the "idea of the Messiah" from Judaism, for Jesus-Christ was not an "idea", but rather the Incarnation of the Word and the fulfillment of the hope of Israel. And the God of Moses and the prophets was no more "borrowed" from the sanctuaries of Egypt, for the clouds, the lightning and thunder on Mount Sinai where He was revealed are not things that can be borrowed. And the vision of creative God in the Egyptian sanctuary, described in the hermetic treatise "Poemander" is not "borrowed" from anyone. Its introduction is as follows:-

> "My thoughts being once seriously busied about the things that are, and my understanding lifted up, all my bodily senses being exceedingly holden back, as it is with them that are very heavy of sleep . . ., me thought I saw one of an exceedingly great stature, and an infinite greatness call me by name, and say unto me," What wouldest thou hear and see? Or what wouldest thou understand to learn and know? "("Poemander" i, book II in "The Divine Pymander of Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus"; trsl. Doctor Everard, London, 1884, p.7)

It is therefore evident that it is a matter of a spiritual <u>experience</u> and not of any teachings transmitted by word of mouth.

A living tradition is not a current of word of mouth but rather a series of revelations and and endeavors. It is the "biography" of <u>authentic faith</u>.

Authentic faith — the condition of the Hanged Man of our Arcanum — thus differs from knowledge due to reasoning in that it possesses absolute certainty, whilst reasoning results only in relative certainty. However, reasoning is not the only method of knowledge. There are also so-called occult or supra-normal methods of knowledge. I have in mind the diverse forms of clairvoyance — corporeal, psychic and spiritual. What is the relationship, therefore, between authentic faith and the experiences of clairvoyance?

It is necessary to say first of all that the whole domain of super-sensory experiences is divided into two intrinsically different parts, namely into that of perception of what is <u>outside of</u> the soul (horizontal perception) and that of revelation of what is <u>above</u> the soul (vertical revelation). The latter is trans-subjective and the former is extra-subjective or objective. Saint Teresa called them "imaginary vision" (i.e. "imaged") and "intellectual vision" (i.e. "non-imaged").

The following is an example of "intellectual vision":-

> "One day when I was at prayer — it was the feast day of the glorious St. Peter — I saw Christ at my side — or, to put it better, I was conscious of Him, for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the soul. He seemed quite close to me and I saw that it was He. As I thought, He was speaking to me. Being completely ignorant that such visions were possible, I was very much afraid at first, and could do nothing but

weep, though as soon as He spoke His first word of assurance to me, I regained my usual calm, and became cheerful and free from fear. All the time Jesus Christ seemed to be at my side, but as this was not an imaginary vision I could not see in what form. But I most clearly felt that He was all the time on my right, and He was witness of everything that I was doing. Each time that I became a little recollected, or was not entirely distracted, I could not but be aware that He was beside me.

In great trouble, I went at once to my confessor to tell him about this. He asked me in what form I had seen Him, and I replied that I had not seen Him. He asked me how I knew it was Christ, and I replied that I did not know how, but that I could not help being aware that He was beside me, and that I had plainly seen and felt it... I had no way of explaining myself except by using comparisons; and no comparison, I think, can help one much to describe this kind of vision, for it is one of the highest possible kinds. This was told me afterwards by a holy man of great spirituality called Friar Peter of Alcantara ... and other men of great learning have told me the same thing. It is, of all the kinds of vision, the one with which the devil can least interfere...

For if I say that I do not see Him with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the soul, because this is no ordinary vision, how then can I know and affirm that He is beside me with greater certainty than if I saw Him? If one says that one is like a person in the dark who cannot see someone though he is beside him, or that one is like somebody who is blind, it is not right. There is some similarity here, but not much, because a person in the dark can perceive with other senses, or hear his neighbor speak or move, or can touch him. Here this is not so, nor is there any feeling of darkness. On the contrary, He appears to the soul by a knowledge brighter than the sun. I do not mean that any sun is seen, or any brightness, but there is a light which, though unseen, illumines the understanding so that the soul may enjoy this great blessing, which brings very great blessings with it....

Then my confessor asked me: Who said that it was Jesus-Christ? I answered: He often tells me so Himself, but before ever He said it, it was impressed on my understanding that it was He, and even before that He used to tell me He was there when I could not see Him... The Lord is pleased to engrave it so deeply on the understanding that one can no more doubt it than one can doubt the evidence of one's eyes." ("The Life of St. Teresa"; ch. 27, trsl. J. M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp. 187-189)

And the following is an example of "imaginary vision":-

"One day when I was at prayer, He was pleased to show me His hands only; their beauty was beyond description. This put me in great fear... A few days later I saw that divine face also, which seems to leave me completely entranced. I could not understand why the Lord was revealing Himself to me gradually like this, since He was afterwards to grant me the favor of seeing Him whole... Once when I was at Mass on St. Paul's Day, there stood before me the most sacred Humanity, in all the beauty and majesty of His resurrection body, as it appears in all the paintings....

Although this vision was imaginary, I never saw it or any other with the eyes of the body, but only with the eyes of the soul. Those who know better than I say that my previous vision was more perfect than this one, while this in its turn

is much nearer to perfection than those that are seen with the eyes of the body... if I were to spend many years imagining how I could invent anything so beautiful, I could not do it. I should not know how to begin. For in its whiteness and radiance alone it exceeds anything that we can imagine. It is not a dazzling radiance but a soft whiteness and infused radiance, which causes the eyes great delight and never tires them; nor are they tired by the brilliance which confronts them as they look on this divine beauty... it does not matter whether they (the eyes) are open or closed; if the Lord wishes us to see it, we shall do so even against our will..." ("The Life of St. Teresa"; ch.28, trsl. J.M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp.196-198)

These examples suffice to give a clear idea of the nature of the trans-subjective experience or "intellectual vision" — as St. Teresa calls it — and of the extra-subjective experience or "imaginary vision". The former is the projection in the soul of a spiritual experience which takes place above it; the soul itself perceives nothing — it can only react to what the Spirit experiences, which makes it participate in the fruits of its experience. It is trans-subjective because the revelation itself takes place neither outside nor within the soul but, rather, above it, i.e. in the Spirit. In this way it happens that the soul has certainty as if it had seen, without having seen, and as if it had heard, without having heard. It is the Spirit which projects into it certainty of its certain experiences. It is the Spirit which "sees", "hears" and "touches" in its own way and which infuses the soul with the fruits of its experience — a certainty equal to, or even higher than, that which the soul would have if it had "seen", "heard" and "touched" itself.

With respect to the extra-subjective experience, or "imaginary vision", it is the soul itself which "sees", "hears" and "touches". It "sees" outside of itself, but with the "eyes of the soul", i.e. not as a hallucination of the bodily senses, but rather as imagination moved from outside instead of being moved by its own arbitrariness. Now the images caused from outside of the soul can be neither sensed nor defined other than as perceptions. And as they are not corporeal perceptions, one experiences and describes them as "perceptions of the soul". This is why Saint Teresa speaks of vision with the "eyes of the soul".

The "eyes of the soul" of which Saint Teresa speaks are what we call in modern Hermeticism the "lotus flowers" or simply "lotuses", and what Hindu yoga names "chakra centers" or "chakras".

Now the higher "lotuses" — the eight-petalled, two-petalled and sixteen-petalled — are organs which are made use of by the Spirit (i.e. either the human Spirit alone, or the human Spirit united with the divine Holy Spirit, or, lastly, the human Spirit united with another human or hierarchical Spirit through and in the Holy Spirit) in the case of revelation from above, i.e. in the case of St. Teresa's "intellectual vision".

The lower "lotuses" — the ten-petalled, six-petalled and four-petalled — are the organs of horizontal perception, i.e. St. Teresa's "imaginary vision".

Concerning the _h_e_a_r_t_, i.e. the "lotus" with twelve petals, it participates in the two kinds of vision or, if you wish, it possesses a third kind of clairvoyant perception, which is the synthesis of the other two. For the "heart" is the center or "lotus" of _l_o_v_e_ — where, truth to tell, it is no longer a question of "above" or "outside" or even of "above" and "below", because love abolishes all distances and all distinctions of space (even distinctions of spiritual space) and has the power to make all things present. It is thus that God is present in a heart glowing with love.

The heart perceives diverse presences as impressions and nuances of spiritual warmth. It is thus that the hearts of the two disciples going to Emmaus recognized the One who went on the way with them before their eyes and their understanding did, and who said to one another after their eyes opened and they recognized him: "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the scriptures?" (Luke xxiv, 13-33).

The heart burning in diverse ways — this is the kind of "vision" and spiritual knowledge which is proper to the heart.

Dear Unknown Friend, be attentive to your heart and towards the nuances of intimate warmth which arises from its depths! Who knows who may go on his way with you without your eyes and your understanding surmising it?

Now, the three "higher" lotuses are above all those of infused certainty or "imperceptible light", and these are the principal instruments (instruments and not sources) of "intellectual vision" or trans-subjective revelation.

The three "lotuses" called "lower" are those of certainty of experience at first hand; they render us, as it were, "eye-witnesses" to invisible things. They manifest them to us in "perceptible light" as forms, movements, colors, sounds and breath — concrete and objective — although incorporeal in the sense of the physical world.

And the central center, the heart or twelve-petalled "lotus", gives us the certainty of authentic faith — that which was born in the "fire of Emmaus" — through which the immediate presence of Entities who want to go on the way with us is manifested. This fire contains at the same time both the "imperceptible light" of "intellectual vision" and the "perceptible light" of "imaginary vision", in their synthesis, which we call here the "fire of Emmaus".

In addition to these two — or three — kinds of supersensible experience there is still another which often passes for spiritual, but which in reality is not. I have in mind the kind of clairvoyance which is due either to over-refinement of the senses or to their hallucinatory function. Saint Teresa of AVILA also mentions it in the text of her autobiography, from which we have quoted above. She says, notably, that "those who know better than I say that my

> previous vision ("intellectual") was more perfect than this one ("imaginary"), while this in its turn is much nearer to perfection than those that are seen with the eyes of the body . . ." (ibid., p.197).

It seems that it was generally admitted among "those who know" from the sixteenth century that there are, in addition to "intellectual vision" and "imaginary vision", visions "that are seen with the eyes of the body", i.e. visions due either to over-refinement of the senses or to hallucination. Therefore the fact was known then, as it is today, that there are people who can read a letter put in an envelope, see a playing card of which only the reverse is shown to them, see colored light around people, animals and plants ("auras"), etc. On the other hand, it was known — as it is known today — that the senses can function in two directions: that they can receive impressions from outside and that they can project expressions of the soul outside. In the latter case it is a matter of hallucinations.

Now, there are illusory hallucinations and revelatory hallucinations. All depends on what the soul exteriorizes through the channels of the corporeal senses. It is therefore quite possible — and in fact happens from time to time — that the soul transforms authentic

and true perceptions into hallucinations, i.e. that it projects from the psychic — and even spiritual — plane onto the physical plane. It is then an illusion with respect to the physical plane, but it is at the same time a revelation with respect to the higher plane to which the original of the hallucinated copy belongs.

"Hallucination" and "illusion" are not synonyms. When Martin LUTHER, as it is recounted, threw an inkpot at the figure of a demon (or the Devil himself, as tradition would have it) which appeared to him, without doubt he acted under an illusion with respect to the plane — the inkpot not being on the same plane as the demon — but should one conclude from this that the demon was in no way present? That there was nothing there and that it was all only a trick of the imagination, without cause or reason?

No, just as there is hysteria due to illusion and hysteria based on truth — as, for example, is the case with stigmatas and wounds from the crown of thorns, which manifest themselves on the bodies of people who have had spiritual experience of the Lord's Passion — so also there are illusory hallucinations, due to fears or immoderate desires, and revelatory hallucinations, i.e. "hallucinations of the truth".

Let us now return to the question concerning the relationship between authentic faith and the experiences of clairvoyance, between the condition of the Hanged Man and the condition of the "seer".

It follows from the preceding that authentic faith is above all the burning fire of the heart, which thus bears a witness to spiritual reality. The light which accompanies it is due to <u>revelation</u> from above by means of the three "lotuses" called "higher", which is, following Saint Teresa, the grace and favor of "intellectual vision".

Concerning "imaginary visions" — and still more strongly so for visions due to over-refinement of the senses or to their inverse functioning (not in the normal direction "external vision – brain", but in the reverse direction "brain – external world"), which takes place in the case of hallucination — they are in no way sources of authentic faith, and possess no more value than what authentic faith, moral conscience and (should it arise) reasoning are able to attribute to them. In any case: authentic faith precedes them, if they signify a revelatory contribution to the spiritual life of the soul; moral conscience precedes them, if they bring about an enrichment of the moral life of the soul; and reasoning precedes them, if they result in an increase of knowledge for the soul or the acquisition of new items of information of value to the soul.

For what one sees or hears must be understood. And one cannot understand without the revelatory "imperceptible light" and "Emmaus fire". One can also not understand and appreciate their value without the work of reasoning, if it is a matter of gaining items of information of a kind to augment knowledge. Reasoning is bound to compare the items of information furnished by clairvoyant experience, to classify them, and to look for relationships between them in order, lastly, to draw conclusions from them.

Clairvoyant or not, all empirical experience is necessarily hypothetical. It is only <u>authentic faith</u> which has absolute certainty.

Thus, dear Unknown Friend, important above all else is the authentic faith of the "fire of Emmaus", then the same faith illumined by the "imperceptible light" from above of "intellectual vision" — <u>after which</u> all will profitably serve your soul: both "imaginary visions"

and visions due to over-refinement of the senses, experience of the senses, moral and logical reasoning, the study of all the sciences, and even hallucinations if they happen without you having arbitrarily sought and provoked them. Do not scorn anything or reject anything, if you have authentic faith. It is this, and this alone, which renders everything truly useful and which gives them value which they would not have without it.

This is the essential message of the Hanged Man, the upside-down man, whose feet are above and whose head is below, whose zodiacalized will is an authentic witness of the truths of the twelve articles of faith, and who lives suspended between two opposed fields of gravitation — Heaven and Earth.

The Hanged Man, who is he? Is he a Saint, a Righteous Man, an Initiate?

He can certainly be regarded as all three, for all three have in common that their will is an organ of Heaven, but what he is most especially, what he represents individually, is neither sanctity, nor righteousness, nor initiation, but something which is their synthesis. The Hanged Man is the eternal JOB, Tried and Tested from century to century, who represents humanity towards God and God towards humanity. The Hanged Man is the truly human Man and his lot is a truly human one.

The Hanged Man is the representative of humanity who is found between two kingdoms — that of this world and that of heaven. For that which is truly human in man and in humanity — this is the Hanged Man.

And it is the Hanged Man who said, thousands of years ago:-

"Has not man a hard destiny upon earth,
and are not his days like the days of a hireling?
Like a slave who longs for the shadow,
and like a hireling who looks for his wages...
Oh that my words were written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
Oh that with an iron pen and lead
they were graven in the rock for ever!...
My foot has held fast to his steps;
I have kept his way and have not turned aside...
For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at last he will stand upon the earth...
And after my skin has thus been destroyed,
then from my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
My heart faints within me in expectation!" (Job)

This is the discourse of the Hanged Man across the centuries.